

Allied prisoners in good condition

ROME (AP) — The Italian Red Cross has been told that all allied prisoners of war held by Iraq are in good condition, Defence Minister Virginio Rognoni said Friday. Mr. Rognoni said the information was given to Italy by the head of the Algerian Red Crescent who just returned from Iraq. The minister said the news was "comforting" but there was no way to immediately verify it. Mr. Rognoni also confirmed that allied and Iraqi military commanders would meet Saturday in Iraq to discuss the release of POWs and other terms of the ceasefire. He said the meeting will be held near Basra and allied commanders will demand that Iraq leave its weapons behind. Italian General Mario Arpino will be part of the allied delegation, Mr. Rognoni said. One Italian airman is known to be held by Iraq and a second is listed as missing in action.

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France: U.N. must enforce all resolutions

PARIS (R) — French President Francois Mitterrand said the U.N. Security Council must make sure all its resolutions, including those on the Palestinian question, are enforced and not just those applying to Iraq. "I have not forgotten the resolutions voted year after year and too often ignored," Mr. Mitterrand told the Dutch daily NRC Handelsblad, a clear reference to resolutions on the Palestinian question. "The Security Council should work to enforce (these resolutions) with the same determination in each case and for all the region," he added in the interview. Arabs have accused the west of hypocrisy, saying that while the U.N. insisted Iraq accept its 12 resolutions demanding its withdrawal from Kuwait, it failed to enforce those calling for Israel's withdrawal from occupied territories. Mr. Mitterrand said the end of the Gulf war presented the Security Council, of which France is a permanent member, with a challenge. "We are at a turning point... will the Security Council be capable of extending and developing the coherent action undertaken since (the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on) August 2?"

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Allies, Iraqis meet today on ceasefire

Combined agency dispatches

U.S. PRESIDENT George Bush announced Friday that allied and Iraqi military leaders would meet Saturday afternoon in the war zone to discuss terms of a ceasefire, including a return of prisoners of war (POWs).

He declined to specify where the meeting would be held, citing security concerns. In reply to a question, Mr. Bush said he did not believe that the meeting could discuss establishment of a security zone between Iraq and Kuwait. Rather, he said, Secretary of State James Baker would cover that issue during his upcoming Middle East trip.

Mr. Bush said at a White House news conference that he was confident the Iraqis would return all allied prisoners of war, but said, "I put it this way, they'd better comply."

Mr. Bush said American troops would be coming home soon, but did not provide any additional information.

He said he didn't believe the Iraqi people had been told the extent of their battlefield losses. "Truth is, we have destroyed Iraq's armour, and I see people dancing in the street" declaring they will win, Mr. Bush said.

Mr. Bush would only say that allied commander General Norman Schwarzkopf and other allied leaders would meet their Iraqi counterparts "in the theatre of operations." He said this was an "important step in securing vic-

tory" by the U.S.-led allies over Iraqi forces during the six-week war that Mr. Bush declared over on Wednesday night.

The president said he would still like the Iraqi people to topple Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and bring Iraq "back to the family of peace-loving nations."

But he said there were no plans for the allies themselves to move against President Saddam. "We are not targeting Saddam and we have no claim on Iraqi territory," he said.

But he noted that "nobody can be absolved of responsibility under international law."

U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney said Friday that the United States was prepared to start bombing Iraq again if Baghdad resumed hostilities in the Gulf war.

"If they were to launch a Scud at Saudi Arabia or Israel or take some other hostile act, there is no question but we would resume hostilities," Mr. Cheney said during an interview on ABC television's "Good Morning America."

"Probably what we would do is to open up the air campaign again. There are a number of additional targets we could go after," Mr. Cheney said.

He also said Iraq must agree to quickly return U.S. and allied prisoners of war before a permanent ceasefire takes effect.

"We will not agree to a ceasefire or have arrangements made for a ceasefire until we are satisfied that we will receive our prisoners in short order," Mr.

Cheney said. He said Gen. Schwarzkopf or another senior officer would probably meet Iraqi officers to discuss details of the ceasefire. He said the talks would be in Iraqi territory now held by the United States.

Mr. Cheney said "thousands and thousands" of Iraqis were killed in the Gulf war but the exact number may never be known.

He said Iraqi prisoners would be interviewed and those suspected of having taken part in "atrocities" against Kuwaitis would be turned over to authorities in Kuwait. Others who wanted to return to Iraq would be sent home eventually.

"I do not expect a large U.S. ground presence over the long term. There may be a transitional period for example in Kuwait where we might be part of a multinational force."

"We may well go to a rotational policy now that we've got the basic combat over with," Cheney added. "We don't want to keep anybody there any longer than we have to."

Mr. Cheney said U.S. troops would be sent home as soon as possible, but it may take several months for the pullout to be complete. He said the first units to return would probably be those which were sent to the Gulf first, such as the 82nd airborne division and the air force's 1st tactical wing.

(Continued on page 5)

Aziz accuses U.S. of violating ceasefire

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Baghdad accused the United States Friday of violating the ceasefire by reinforcing its troops inside Iraq and demanding their immediate withdrawal.

Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz made the charge in a statement carried by the Iraqi News Agency (INA) and broadcast on Baghdad Radio.

Mr. Aziz also accused U.S. troops of "provocative activities" and said these should stop.

"We have today learned that despite announcement of the ceasefire there is a military force on our western border made up of a number of tanks and infantrymen still in various areas on the road linking Nasiriyah and Samawa," Mr. Aziz said.

"They are making attacks incompatible with the ceasefire. If (the force) is carrying out provocative activities... and we learned of this only this morning because of difficulty in communications."

Allied commanders say several of their divisions swept from the Saudi Arabian border through

southern Iraq to the Euphrates River valley on which both towns are sited.

Nasiriyah is a major transportation hub on the Euphrates River about 110 kilometres west of the confluence with the Tigris and 250 kilometres south of Baghdad.

On Wednesday, the Iraqis said allied airborne units had launched an attack at the Ali al-Haseb west of Nasiriyah and met heavy resistance from civilians and the popular army militia.

"Despite the announcement of the ceasefire declared by the United States and which we observed immediately, there is a U.S. and Western military force made up of a number of tanks and infantry still in various areas of the road linking Al Nasiriyah with Al Samawa (to the west) and up to a point on the road south of Al Nasiriyah," Mr. Aziz said.

"The aggressive forces had been deployed in these areas during the aggression in a show of muscle by dropping troops from

Algeria denies Saddam report

ATLANTA, Georgia (Agency) — Algeria's ambassador to the United States denied here Friday that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein had asked his government for asylum.

Ambassador Abdul Rahman Benfid told reporters: "It is only a rumour — there is an official denial in Algeria."

The French newspaper Le Monde reported from Algiers on Friday that President Saddam had decided to step down and had asked Algerian authorities for asylum.

"Algerian authorities are seeking assurances from the coalition allies that they will not pursue Saddam Hussein once he is in exile," Le Monde wrote.

Asked about the plausibility of such an offer, Mr. Benfid said: "It is up to the Iraqi people to deal with this situation."

Mr. Benfid was in Atlanta to deliver a speech to the American-Arab Affairs Council annual meeting.

President Saddam, bitter over being "cut loose" by the Soviet Union, inquired through unspecified channels on Wednesday if Algeria would be willing to grant him political asylum, Le Monde asserted.

Algerian authorities agreed to the request on the conditions that it was acceptable to the new Iraqi leadership, and that no attempt would be made by the coalition to make President Saddam accountable for war crimes or reparations, Le Monde said in its front-page report.

It said Algeria received assurances on the latter point from the allies.

U.S. President George Bush cast doubt in Washington Friday that such clemency would be possible.

"I cannot have a wand and absolve someone of responsibilities," Mr. Bush said at a news conference.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said in Washington that he knew nothing of such a move by President Saddam.

"I don't think any tears would be shed if Saddam Hussein were to leave power," Mr. Baker told reporters Friday after a meeting with German Foreign Minister Hans-Dieter Genscher.

Mr. Baker said any question of President Saddam seeking asylum



King urges Arab reconciliation

Jordan happy with Kuwaitis regaining their country, also shares Iraqis' wounds and pain
Democracy can save Arabs from pitfalls of conflict

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein appealed Friday for reconciliation in the divided Arab World.

In his first address to the nation since Feb. 6, the King said: "We would like to assure the whole world that Jordan throws its arms open wide to all those who wish to establish friendly relations based on mutual respect and cooperation."

"Gloating and apportioning blame are not Arab traits, nor are they compatible with their spiritual values because they lead to enmity, hatred and alienation," King Hussein said.

"On this day we see the beginning of a new Arab era, a new

dawn between Iraq and Kuwait marked by reconciliation and reconstruction in both countries," he said.

The King warned of further unrest in the region if the gap between rich and poor were not addressed.

"... We must also focus attention on the growing disparity between rich and poor nations in the region which predates continuing social and political unrest if it is not addressed institutionally... and not just as an expression of charity," he said.

"It is through the widespread adoption of democracy in Arab countries that we can best save

the Arab Nation from the pitfalls of armed conflict," said the King.

He said he was well aware that wounds created by the crisis might hinder Arab reconciliation but asked for all nations to make an honest effort.

He appealed to the international community to devote the same attention to the Palestinian problem that it had given to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Jordanians were happy that Kuwaitis had regained their independence after the Iraqi retreat but they also sympathised with "our Iraqi brothers nursing their wounds and pain," said the King. "We shall stand with the Iraqi

people as they look forward to rebuilding their country and to healing their wounds."

Israel should learn a lesson from the way Palestinians under Israeli occupation showed joy every time Iraq fired missiles at the Jewish state, the King said.

"Such 'happiness' is no more than a reflection of deep-seated and profound sorrow, coupled with despair of attaining international justice and of having waited so long for salvation in freedom and the right to live with dignity," the King said.

See full text of the King's speech on page 5.

Big powers review Gulf resolution at U.N.

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Five powerful U.N. ambassadors met Friday to discuss a draft resolution for a Gulf war settlement that diplomats say seeks to choke arms shipments to Iraq as long as Saddam Hussein remains in power.

The proposed Security Council resolution would extend the arms cutoff imposed on Iraq after its Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

The ambassadors of the United States, Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union — the five council members with veto power — met at the U.S. mission for final consultations on the text.

"We have always said that if Saddam Hussein remains in power, it's the view of the United States government that an arms embargo must continue. That remains our view," State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said Thursday in Washington.

Diplomats said the resolution drafted by U.S. diplomats also renews calls for: — Iraq's compliance with all 12 Security Council resolutions on the invasion.

— Immediate release of all Kuwaitis and third-country captives.

— Acceptance in principle of liability for damage and injuries caused by Iraq.

— Immediate return of Kuwaiti airplanes and other assets removed after the invasion.

— Rescinding of Iraq's annexation of Kuwait.

The United States was drafting the resolution even as the Security Council was holding consultations on formalising Thursday's provisional ceasefire called by President George Bush.

Some diplomats said they had hoped the council would swiftly formalise the ceasefire. But the United States and Britain argued there was no rush.

"We already have a ceasefire," U.S. Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering said Thursday.

The United States argued instead that the most important

thing was a meeting of allied and Iraqi commanders to discuss ceasefire terms such as an exchange of prisoners and release of Kuwaitis. Iraq has agreed to the meeting.

A U.S. official in Washington, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Iraqi diplomat Khaled Shewayish was called to the State Department late Thursday and told where and when U.S. military commanders would like to meet with Iraqi commanders.

After the meeting, Western diplomats said, the Security Council would be in a position to declare a permanent ceasefire, send observers and begin work on establishing security in the region.

After the Security Council consultations broke up Thursday, Mr. Pickering and Iraqi Ambassador Abdul Amir Al Anbari held a brief conversation, diplomats said. Details were not available.

Prospects of a council meeting on the issue Friday remained uncertain. Some Western diplomats said Monday was more likely.

Kuwaiti Ambassador Mohammad Abdul Hassan told reporters at least 22,000 Kuwaiti civilians, including 5,000 in the past few days, had been seized by Iraqis, in addition to 8,632 Kuwaiti military prisoners of war.

He said all prisoners should be returned and Iraq should renounce all territorial claims before a formal ceasefire is declared.

"Iraq is not forthcoming about these things and we are very much doubtful for Iraq," Mr. Abdul Hassan said.

Mr. Anbari told reporters, "We are ready to expedite repatriation as soon as possible." He said his government wants the International Committee of the Red Cross to handle the logistics.

Earlier, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said the United Nations is prepared to send observers or peacekeepers "as soon as possible" if requested by the Security Council.

Relief group says blanket Israeli curfew harming Palestinians

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — International relief groups accused Israel Friday of inflicting "unprecedented damage" on Palestinian community life by a Gulf-related curfew on the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

And a human rights group working under the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem said separately the army curfew, imposed since mid-January, was illegal and it planned to challenge the army in the Israeli supreme court.

In Arab Jerusalem, a coordinating committee of International Non-Governmental Organisations, including Save the Children and the Catholic Relief Service, said in a statement that the curfew had affected all aspects of Palestinian life.

"The impact of the Israeli-imposed quarantine on the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been devastating. Palestinian self-reliance has been severely jeopardised and all sectors of society had sustained unprecedented damage," it said.

Israel confined all Arab residents of the occupied territories to their homes at the outset of the Gulf war on Jan. 17, saying it feared demonstrations and violence by Palestinians who supported Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The army eased restrictions last month, lifting curfews on most areas during the daytime but limiting travel between cities. Some Arab workers have been allowed to return to jobs in Israel.

The statement, using data from Palestinian economists, said curfews had caused an estimated \$150 million to \$200 million loss to the economy of the occupied territories, or some eight per cent of annual gross domestic product.

The army curfew prevented over 100,000 Palestinians from crossing to work in Israel, forced

factories to close down and left farms abandoned.

Some Palestinians have sold jewellery and other belongings to provide for their family needs.

The eight-page statement also accused Israel of using the curfew to impose other forms of collective punishment like tax raids and land confiscation.

Military authorities demolished or sealed more than 30 Palestinian-owned homes and 11 wells and arrested some 4,500 people for curfew violations and other charges, the relief groups said.

An Israeli army spokesman said he was not familiar with the group's figures and had not seen the report.

The statement said eight Palestinians were shot dead by Israeli soldiers during the curfews, another by an Israeli civilian and at least 72 Gazans were wounded by army gunfire.

Figures compiled by Reuters show that at least six Arabs have been killed in the occupied areas since the Gulf war began.

On Friday, a 23-year-old Palestinian from the West Bank town of Jenin died from Israeli army gunshot wounds, hospital officials said.

Official at Nablus's Al Itrihad hospital said Najih Mustafa Elhwaileh was shot some three months ago. At least 773 Palestinians have been killed by Israelis since the outbreak of the 38-month-old uprising.

The statement also charged that at least five Palestinians have died either because Israeli soldiers prevented their speedy transfer to hospitals or because they had been deprived of medication under the curfew.

The body of a Palestinian woman was found Friday strangled and stabbed to death in the

(Continued on page 3)

All Kuwait oil wells put out of action by 'Iraqis or allies'

KUWAIT CITY (R) — All Kuwait's 950 producing oil wells have been set ablaze or otherwise damaged by Iraqi sabotage or allied bombing, according to initial surveys by the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC).

"Our provisional assessment is that they have damaged every producing well," KOC executive Mubash Al Yaseen said in an interview.

"Our feeling from checks our personnel have done so far is that all the wells have been exploded."

Wells that had not caught fire when blasted by Iraqi explosives had been badly damaged and were spouting crude oil. Some wells had been destroyed by allied bombing, he said, but the vast majority had been blown up by Iraqi forces.

Mr. Yaseen and other KOC executives said the country had about 16 days supply of oil left in storage tanks for domestic consumption only.

They declined to say when they expected Kuwait to be able to resume oil production or exports.

Mr. Yaseen and other KOC

production and fire control officials were speaking at the Al Ahmadi oil complex. Hinge columns of fire and smoke rose from all sides.

The officials said Iraq's Republican Guards planted explosives on every wellhead in the country immediately after they invaded on Aug. 2.

But they did not connect detonators and fuses until much later. Large-scale destruction of oil wells began only last week, the officials said.

"This could have been prevented," Mr. Yaseen said.

"It is a great shame the allies could not have prevented our wells from being exploded... I cried. The allies had a great opportunity to prevent this. The oil wells were not equipped with detonators for several months."

Mr. Yaseen stressed he was not criticising allied tactics, saying there may have been other considerations in the conduct of the war.

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(Continued on page 3)

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(Continued on page 3)

Iraq says allied paratroopers wiped out

NICOSIA (AP) — Baghdad Radio said Friday allied airborne units that landed behind Iraqi lines were wiped out and that Iraq would be remembered forever for its stand against a "total seige."

On day two of the Gulf war ceasefire, a radio commentary denounced Arab partners of the Western allies, who it said stopped the fighting only after encountering fierce battles with the Republican Guards.

Newspapers praised Iraqi forces, with one headline proclaiming: "By God's will and the might of our leader Saddam Hussein we foiled the aggressors' plot."

"Oh, our beloved Iraq, you are still inside the heart and conscience of every Iraqi

citizen and every soldier," a radio commentary said. "You teach mankind many, many things."

The government on Thursday ordered its soldiers to stop fighting and agreed to comply with all 12 U.N. resolutions placed against it because of the Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

At the same time, it scoffed at allied claims of victory after six weeks of relentless air strikes and four days of ground fighting that took U.S.-led troops into Iraqi territory as Iraq's soldiers pulled back from Kuwait.

"All the paratroopers dropped behind the Iraqi defensive lines at the approaches to Dhi Qar governorate, southern Iraq, were wiped out after all the

communication lines were cut between the coalition forces and the U.S. forces command in the Dhi Qar region," the radio said Friday.

It said various sources reported that President George Bush's ceasefire decision resulted from heavy tank battles "described as the fiercest battle since World War II."

A radio commentary praised Iraqi citizens.

"You have performed the acts of dignified men and confronted and buried a conspiracy which went past your borders to include the whole Arab homeland," the radio said.

"At the same time, large and rich Arab regimes sided with the unsuccessful conspira-

cy, supplied it with men and money, and hired out its cheap and mercenary media to the dirty petrodollars," it said.

The commentary said Iraqis "have stood up against the raids of animosity, violence and hate for more than 42 days. Their homes, houses of worship, air raid shelters, schools, hospitals, and economic and civilian installations were subjected to more than 100,000 air raids."

It said that was "more than double the number of raids carried out against Nazi Germany."

"By this stand alone, oh Iraq, the whole world will regard you with pride and dignity until the end of time."

Mr. Levy, 53, labelled a pragmatist by friends and an opportunist by foes, aspires to succeed Mr. Shamir, the 75-year-old leader of their rightist Likud party which has been accused by Washington of policies that block the road to peace.

Haaretz newspaper said Friday that senior Likud officials urgently wanted to call a party convention to keep Mr. Levy from committing the government to a peace compromise contrary to party policy.

Likud opposes giving up the occupied territories. Haaretz said the Likud officials favoured talks with Arab states before opening negotiations with Palestinians.

Mr. Levy said he was not familiar with the group's figures and had not seen the report.

The statement said eight Palestinians were shot dead by Israeli soldiers during the curfews, another by an Israeli civilian and at least 72 Gazans were wounded by army gunfire.

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Iran to send food to Iraq

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran is prepared to send food for the people of Iraq, its foe in the 1980-88 war, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Friday.

The first shipment will include powdered milk, baby food, flour, cooking oil and fruit, IRNA said.

The agency, monitored in Nicosia, said U.N. Security General Javier Perez de Cuellar was informed of Iran's decision.

It said the food would be shipped across the border with help from the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In a separate dispatch, IRNA said that 56 Iraqis captured in the Iran-Iraq war were freed by Baghdad and arrived home Thursday.

It added that Tehran would repatriate a similar number of Iraqis.

The Iraqis came home as more than 100,000 Iraqi and at least 13 allied prisoners await repatriation.

Iran was among the few countries which dispatched food and medicine to Iraq since U.N. sanctions were imposed on Baghdad following its invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2.

The Iraqis maintained they were not violating the embargo, which permitted "humanitarian shipments."

More than 70,000 prisoners on both sides were repatriated in a month-long swap that was abruptly halted by Baghdad in September.

The Iraqis accused Iraq of withholding thousands of POWs, but Baghdad said all had been repatriated.

The Red Cross, which coordinated the exchange, upholds Iran's claim, but says it has no estimate of the number of Iraqis still held by Iraq.

Iran said the Muslim world will not allow Western troops to stay in southern Iraq.

"America and the other Western states now occupying Iraq must realize that they will not be able to stay in this country," Iranian radio's international service said.

"The Iraqi people are part of the Islamic Nation, and the Islamic World will not allow America to continue its occupation of Iraq in this manner," the radio added.

War's end brings hope to wife of jailed Palestinian

By Larry Thorson
The Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — The wife of a leading Palestinian activist jailed by Israel for allegedly spying for Iraq hopes the end of the Gulf war may mean freedom for her husband.

Sari Nusseibeh's imprisonment Jan. 29 drew protests from the United States, Britain, France and Amnesty International, because Israeli authorities jailed him without trial.

The 42-year-old philosophy professor, a key promoter of Palestinian independence, was accused of passing information to the Iraqis about their missile attacks against Israel. But Israel did not put him on trial, instead using what is known as administrative detention to jail him on the basis of undisclosed evidence.

His British-born wife, Lucy, said in an interview Thursday the judge who reviewed the evidence had cut the defence ministry's request for six months' detention to three months because the case was weak.

"The judge said it was preventive (detention) rather than punitive, and sometimes war changes the whole security situation," she said.

Her husband should be released "if it's clear the war is really finished," she said.

"According to what the judge said, he should be released immediately," she said.

If Mr. Nusseibeh is freed, he will find the Israeli-Palestinians divide deeper than ever.

Palestinians lost the good will of Israeli doves by cheering Iraqi missile attacks on Tel Aviv. They need an articulate spokesman like Mr. Nusseibeh, with his Oxford degree and a philosophy doctorate from Harvard University, now more than ever.

Mrs. Nusseibeh and other Palestinians say he was jailed to discredit moderates who claim a Palestinian state could live in peace with Israel.

But Yossi Olmert, head of the government press office, said Mr. Nusseibeh was jailed because of "specific pro-Iraq activities in wartime."

"It was an embarrassing situation for this guy who was taken as a moderate," Mr. Olmert said.

"He cannot be a moderate if he is supporting Iraq."

He admitted, though, that Mr. Nusseibeh might be released now.

The evidence against the activist has not been officially released. Press reports refer to a phone call to Mr. Nusseibeh from an Iraqi diplomat in Tunisia after the Gulf war started Jan. 17.

Mrs. Nusseibeh said it was "complete nonsense" to claim the call showed spying.

"We don't even know if there was an Iraqi phone call," she said. "If you get a call from someone saying he is someone and you never met him, how do you know who he is?"

Her husband spoke "in a very general way about the situation among Palestinians," she said.

"This is not being a spy; on the contrary, it's a natural polite way of dealing with a questionable phone call. A man who was a spy would hang up in a case like that," she said.

Some Israelis say the Mr. Nusseibeh case supports the view that peace could not take place if the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip get an independent state.

A dovish member of parliament, Yossi Sarid of the Citizens' Rights movement, had often met Mr. Nusseibeh. Yet, after his arrest, Mr. Sarid denounced him.

Mr. Sarid said evidence presented at a closed parliamentary committee convinced him the Palestinian could have been convicted and sentenced to several years in prison.

"Mr. Nusseibeh, whose father Anwar Nusseibeh once was defence minister of Jordan, was a key spokesman during the three-year Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza. In 1987 he was beaten up by fellow Arabs for his contacts with Israelis."

Mrs. Nusseibeh met her husband while he was an undergraduate at Oxford. They have lived in Jerusalem since 1978, when he finished his doctorate at Harvard and returned to teach at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank.

Mrs. Nusseibeh was asked how she keeps her spirits up, despite the dangers faced by her husband.

"Perhaps it's because he is involved," she said. "That in itself gives hope. He's a man who works for solutions."

Dumas: PLO is only spokesman

WASHINGTON (AP) — French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas has singled out the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the only true representative of Palestinians at this time.

He said he had discussed the problem at length with Secretary of State James Baker and that their views differ but may eventually come together.

Yasser Arafat and other leaders of the organisation supported Iraq in the conflict with the United States and other countries in the coalition.

Mr. Dumas acknowledged that the PLO had suffered from its stand. But he suggested it still had strong support in Jordan and in the occupied territories.

"At the moment I do not see any true, authentic representation of the Palestinian population outside of this organisation," he told a news conference.

In Paris, Defence Minister Pierre Joxe pledged support for the Palestinians in the United Nations.

Mr. Dumas said Baker had told him that it is necessary to settle the Palestinian problem as soon as possible "noting that there could not be an international conference in the immediate future for the simple reason that Israel would not take part."

Mr. Dumas repeated his support for a conference. Mr. Baker will visit the Middle East next week.

stopping in Israel for the first time in his two years as secretary of state. Mr. Dumas said he would be going soon himself.

Mr. Dumas said French troops could be out of the area quickly, he called it a matter of days, but said it was essentially a military question. In Paris, Mr. Joxe pledged to keep French troops there as long as the international community desires.

Mr. Dumas said in a television interview: "I think during a short period it will be necessary to secure the region. And of course, for instance in Kuwait, on the boundary, it is necessary to maintain some forces."

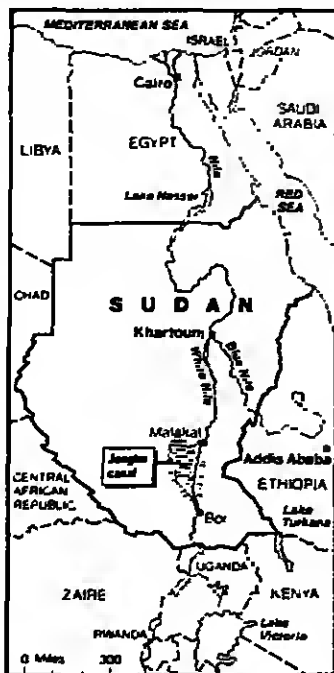
But afterwards our mission is not to stay there. I am speaking for France."

Mr. Dumas said it would be a mistake to raise the embargo on arms against Iraq.

"It would be silly to permit Saddam Hussein to buy arms and to start again. But at the same time it will be necessary for all the people to buy what they need," he added in an interview broadcast by Cable News Network.

He said the West should keep in mind the idea of helping people who need food and clothing.

He added that France stands ready to help restore good relations between the West and the Arab World, especially in North Africa and the countries which have been suffering from the war.



Red Cross appeals for Sudan aid

GENEVA (AP) — Famine threatens up to 13 million people in Ethiopia and Sudan after two years of drought and continuing civil wars, the International Red Cross has said in issuing an emergency aid appeal.

Saying "widespread famine is imminent" in both countries, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies appealed for about \$66 million in international emergency aid.

The Red Cross appeal is the latest by international relief agencies which have warned in recent weeks that the area could face a repeat of the devastating 1981-85 famine.

"It's nearly as bad, very close to the situation in 1984-85," said Ann Naef, a Red Cross spokeswoman.

Sudan and Ethiopia are each reported to be facing a food shortfall of about one million tons, which is close to the levels during the previous famine, Ms. Naef said.

The league's appeal asked for \$41 million dollars to be earmarked for famine relief in Ethiopia, and the rest of the money for Sudan.

Up to six million people in Ethiopia face famine after two years of drought and "total crop failure," the league said. Civil strife in northern Ethiopia has driven as many as 800,000 people from their homes and fields.

The appeal would enable the Ethiopian Red Cross to provide food, water and medical aid to 400,000 people, the league said.

The league said "acute food shortages" in Sudan threatened more than seven million Sudanese after two successive years of drought compounded by a long-running civil war that has disrupted food production.

Deaths by starvation have already been reported in Sudan.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Stranded British jet destroyed in battle

LONDON (R) — A British Airways Jumbo jet stranded at Kuwait's airport since Iraq invaded last August was destroyed in a battle this week, the company said Thursday. British Airways said the Boeing 747 appeared to have been hit in crossfire during a fierce artillery fight between Iraqi troops and allied forces at Kuwait City's international airport. The airliner, carrying 363 passengers and 18 crew, landed on Aug. 2 just hours before the Iraqi invasion. It was on a scheduled flight from London via Kuwait to Madras, India. The passengers and crew, plus about 60 British Airways staff already in Kuwait, were at first held by Iraqi forces at hotels in Kuwait along with other foreigners. All Westerners held in Baghdad and Kuwait were released just before Christmas. British Airways said the jumbo jet was completely destroyed but it was fully insured.

Manila hopes to make money

MANILA (AP) — President Corason Aquino said Friday her government will seek jobs for Filipino workers to help rebuild Kuwait and other areas devastated by the Gulf war. Mrs. Aquino said she has sent letters congratulating the emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al Sabah, and Saudi King Fahd on the liberation of Kuwait and offered "our assistance in so far as the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the affected areas are concerned." She said in a press conference that she will soon send Labour Secretary Rnben Torres to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to discuss with Gulf officials the prospects for hiring Filipino workers. In addition, Mrs. Aquino said her government also hopes to win contracts for Philippine firms in reconstruction projects. There are about half a million Filipino workers now deployed in the Gulf nations, 350,000 in Saudi Arabia. The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration forecasts that in Saudi Arabia, Filipinos can get at least 50,000 of 700,00 vacancies that will follow the expulsion of Yemenis and other Arab states that supported Iraq, a spokesman said. About 30,000 jobs will be open to Filipinos, medical professionals, engineers and skilled labourers in Kuwait.

Kurds clash with Turkish troops

ANKARA (R) — At least three people were killed when Kurdish civilians clashed with security forces in the southeastern Turkish town of Sirnak, officials said on Friday. Residents said four people died. Sirnak Provincial Governor Aydin Aslan told Reuters the dead included a soldier who was electrocuted by a high-tension wire from a pylon during riots on Thursday. He said one civilian died of stab wounds which may have been caused by picks and shovels used by rioters. An official in the provincial capital Diyarbakir said another civilian died of bullet wounds in hospital late on Thursday. Sirnak residents said a woman had also been killed in the clashes between Kurdish townspeople and security forces, the worst in the southeast for more than a year.

Family of Moroccan general released

PARIS (R) — The widow and children of Moroccan General Mohammed Oufkir have been released after more than 18 years in detention after a failed coup against King Hassan. French press reports said Friday. They were detained after warplanes fired at the king's plane in August 1972. The monarch escaped unhurt and Gen. Oufkir, blamed for the attack, was reported to have committed suicide. Faouia Oufkir, 54, her six children aged 20 to 35, and a cousin were freed last Tuesday and were living with relatives in Rabat, press and radio reports quote the family's French lawyers as saying. Their release would be announced officially on Sunday on the 30th anniversary of King Hassan's coronation.

Kuwaiti opposition leader attacked

WASHINGTON (R) — A leading Kuwaiti opposition figure was wounded in an apparent assassination attempt in Kuwait City, the Washington Post reported Friday. Hamid Younan, a former member of the Kuwaiti parliament, was attacked at his front door on Thursday, the paper said. Mr. Younan, 41, said he opened his door after someone knocked and called his name. He was then shot by a gunman. While saying he had no idea who was responsible, Mr. Younan offered several possible reasons for the attack. "One, I'm a member of the opposition. Second, I'm a lawyer and maybe someone is angry at me, or possibly it was Iraqis wanting to cause trouble," he told the Post from his hospital bed. Mr. Younan was a member of the Kuwaiti parliament which was suspended in 1986. He has been active in Kuwait's democracy movement. During his time as a legislator, he investigated financial abuses by prominent members of the ruling Sabah family, the paper said.

Kuwaiti opposition demands elections

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP) — As Kuwait's government prepares to go home, the country's opposition is stepping up pressure for the reestablishment of parliament, free elections and a government representing all political points of view.

They have asked Kuwait's ruling family for a pledge that military rule won't last too long, and that the country's parliament, dissolved in 1962, be revived. Some are demanding that a date be set for parliamentary elections.

But, even the opposition concedes that these are unusual times demanding unusual measures and have thrown support behind the temporary imposition of martial law.

"Martial law under the circumstances is necessary, but we hope it does not stretch for long," said Mubarak Al Dowdalla, an outspoken religious leader and opposition member.

"... There is fear of military rule, so there must be good watchdog and that would be government of national unity."

The subject of forming a "unity" government representing all political views to oversee the reconstruction of Kuwait was a focus of attention during a two-day meeting this week between ten opposition leaders and Sheikh Saad, crown prince and military governor of Kuwait.

The opposition said the unity government's primary task would be to fix a date for elections.

At the meeting, Sheikh Saad reaffirmed the emir's commitment to uphold the country's 1962 constitution, and repeated Kuwait's pledge to revive the parliament and hold elections.

But, Mr. Dowdalla said, Sheikh Saad had been under pressure before August to reinstate elections and open the country to greater political freedom. The demands found a sympathetic ear with Western governments forming the U.S.-led coalition.

Opposition members, including Muslims and leftists, had planned to hold a pro-democracy meeting in March. But with the latest ouster of Iraq from Kuwait, plans have changed.

"The Kuwaiti masses would not accept such a meeting at this time, and prefer that such a conference ... be within Kuwait," Mr. Dowdalla said.

Sununu: U.S. doesn't want to force Iraqis to go home

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States doesn't want to force Iraqi prisoners of war to return to their homeland if they don't want to go, but believes most eventually will want to return, President George Bush's principal assistant said Thursday night.

The scores of thousands of Iraqi prisoners are in the hands of Saudi troops, and their fate will be part of discussions among coalition members at the United Nations, said John Sununu, White House chief of staff.

"We don't want to force anybody to do anything they don't want to do," Mr. Sununu said in a CNN interview.

"We think that over a period of time there will be a situation ... where they'll decide to go back. But we certainly don't want to force them to go back right away."

Mr. Bush has called on the Iraqi people to topple Saddam Hussein, and Mr. Sununu said the United States was "looking forward to an Iraq that can be very much part of a solution to the regional issues."

"Whether it's an overthrow or a natural succession or whatever it is, we think the Iraqi people are entitled to make the choice themselves. But we think they'll make a right choice eventually."

Mr. Sununu said the Iraqi people "may not yet know how severe a loss this has been for them," adding that the more the government acts to "shelter the people from reality, the more abrupt the awareness of what has happened, the more severe the change that's liable to take place."

The issue of prisoner return delayed a truce in the Korean war for 20 months as North Korea and China insisted that all members of their armed forces under control of the United Nations coalition be handed over whether they wanted to go home or not.

The United States and its allies insisted that no one be returned against his will and eventually won the point. After the truce in July 1953, those refusing to go

home numbered nearly 22,000 Chinese and North Koreans, and 347 from U.N. side, most of them South Koreans.

Iraq is believed to be holding at least nine allied prisoners of war, a four-man U.S. television news crew taken captive near the Kuwait-Saudi border and thousands of Kuwaitis.

Military sources in London said the allies had taken 175,000 Iraqis prisoner.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said in an interview published Friday the Gulf allies were looking for ways of ousting President Saddam and he hoped they would succeed.

The Gulf war had taught Iraq a lesson, but more could be done, he told the French daily Le Figaro.

"I know the leaders of the anti-Iraq coalition ... are looking for ways of ending the rule of Saddam Hussein. I hope they will find the means."

Mr. Shamir said Israel would not forget Iraq's missile attacks during the Gulf war.

About 40 Iraqi missiles hit Israel in six weeks of war.

Mr. Shamir said the Gulf had not eliminated Iraq's threat to Israel as Middle East history had shown armies could be rebuilt.

"As long as Saddam Hussein stays in power, he will look for opportunities to attack us," he said.

"After Saddam anyone can try to follow his example and try again, hoping to do better."

Mr. Shamir repeated that Israel wanted to negotiate with Arab countries, but indicated it was not prepared to return occupied territories.

"No country in the world is prepared to give up any part of its territory. I don't see why some people think Israel should act in a different way ... we are not an exception," he said.

But asked if Israel would be willing to discuss the Golan Heights it seized from Syria in 1967 in negotiations with Damascus, Mr. Shamir replied: "We shall not say anything until talks start."

Extent of devastation still unknown in Iraq

By John Rice
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — War in the Gulf has left Iraq a deeply wounded nation, mourning its dead and facing years of civilian reconstruction and austerity.

Nobody knows yet the full scope of the devastation caused by the five weeks of air bombardment and four pulverising days of war on the ground.

But allied war claims indicate that thousands of Iraqi soldiers may have died. Government and medical officials in Baghdad said even before the allied ground offensive began that as many as 20,000 Iraqi civilians had been killed in the air raids that began Jan. 17.

Life for the survivors among Iraq's 17 million people will be hard in the months ahead amid the devastation caused by the allied air offensive.

Oil refineries, power plants, petrochemical complexes and industrial sites have been destroyed along with militarily strategic targets. Residential areas were also hit by allied bombs and missiles.

The allied attacks destroyed dozens of key bridges and cra-

tered major highways. That will disrupt civilian traffic for months, if not years.

Iraq now faces a reconstruction bill that is expected to run into tens of billions of dollars. There will probably be massive reparations demanded by Kuwait.

While Western countries are lining up to rebuild Kuwait, few have indicated any willingness to give financial breaks to Iraq.

Before the invasion of Kuwait Aug. 2, Iraq was burdened with a foreign debt from the war with Iran of up to \$70 billion. That remains, with nothing in the treasury to pay for the country's second reconstruction in three years.

Iraq sits on oil reserves estimated at \$100 billion barrels, the second largest in the world after Saudi Arabia.

Exports, Baghdad's main source of revenue, were halted by the U.N. embargo in August. Even if they resume soon, much of the money may have to go in war reparations.

There are shortages caused by the embargo and these may continue because the U.N. sanctions still remain. For how long that will be so is not known yet.

Most of Iraq has no electricity.

There are no telephones. Fuel is scarce. Water supply and sewage are barely functioning.

"When you cut electricity, you cut water. All civilian work stopped," said Zouheir Abdul Hadi, manager of the ruined Doura power station in the southern part of Baghdad.

He said the 610-megawatt plant alone had cost \$500 million to build in the early 1980s.

Many parts of the capital have water for only a few hours a day or for a few days a week because pumping plants are operating only emergency generators.

Health officials say the water problem combined with the onset of hot weather in a few weeks, could lead to epidemics of cholera, typhoid and other diseases.

Dr. Anneke Verster, a Dutch nutritionist who was with a World Health Organisation team that visited Baghdad during the bombing, said diarrhoea has quadrupled among children because what's left of the water system has been polluted.

An estimated one-quarter of Baghdad's pre-war population moved into the surrounding countryside during the allied bombing.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

PRAYER TIMES

06:51 Fajr
06:59 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:49 Dhuhr
15:00 'Asr
17:30 Maghrib
18:47 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifeth, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 623666
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 625543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

WEATHER

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be relatively cold and partly cloudy and there will be a chance for scattered showers in the northern part of the country. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy.

Min./max. temp.
Amman 11 / 23
Aqaba 3 / 15
Deraia 3 / 15
Jordan Valley 9 / 20

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:
Dr. Adel Ammani 812148
Dr. Salah Al'Usoud 649028
Dr. Ahmad Othman 623629
Dr. Tawfiq Qab'in 661912
Firas pharmacy 778336
Al Asama pharmacy 637053
Nairookh pharmacy 623672

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Adel Ammani 812148
Dr. Salah Al'Usoud 649028
Dr. Ahmad Othman 623629
Dr. Tawfiq Qab'in 661912
Firas pharmacy 778336
Al Asama pharmacy 637053
Nairookh pharmacy 623672

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yaouub pharmacy 644945
Shamsan pharmacy 637660
IBDD:
Dr. Ali Omari (—)
Al Shuraa's pharmacy (273825)
ZARQA:
Dr. Jihad Maseh (—)
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 636321
Herald Complaints 658000
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalifeh Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Akhleh Maternity, J. Amn. 644412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Aila Int. Airport 08-33200

MARKET PRICES

Civil defence chief praises public support, regrets Iraq damages

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan marked International Civil Defence Day Friday with a sad reflection on the great devastation in Iraq and the sufferings inflicted on the civilian population there as a result of the Gulf conflict, said Civil Defence Department (CDD) Director Maj. Gen. Asif Al Ghoul.

The International Civil Defence Day prompted the CDD to express deep appreciation to members of the public for their continued support for civil defence work and cooperation with the department in providing emergency and other essential aid to the victims of wars and natural disasters, Ghoul said in a statement on the anniversary.

Being a member of the International Civil Defence Organisation (ICDO), Jordan shares with other world member states the view about the need for promoting activities designed to develop guidance, training and organisation in civil defence work at all levels, Ghoul noted.

He said that the CDD would continue to count on the help of volunteers from the public and was ready to offer training to all citizens and organisations so that they can contribute to CDD work in times of need.

Enhancing the CDD's capabilities means offering the public a stronger tool with which to defend its various installations and property and safeguard human life, said Al Ghoul in his statement.

Ghoul said that the Jordanians were pained to see speedy resolution taken to cause devastation, while the United Nations failed to take practical steps to ensure security and happiness for people around the world by helping to establish peace everywhere.

The CDD, Ghoul added, did not shoulder along the task of providing protection and emergency aid in times of need because this was the responsibility of the whole population.

He said that for this reason the CDD would continue to strive to serve as a catalyst for thwarting danger that could threaten public security and property and would continue to help spread awareness among members of the public in this regard.

The International Civil Defence Organisation, which is based in Geneva, aims to intensify and coordinate on a world-wide scale the development and improvement of organisation, means and techniques for preventing and reducing the consequences of natural disasters in peacetime, or of the use of weapons in times of conflict.

Jordan and other Arab states are members of the International Civil Defence Organisation which was founded in 1931.



Her Royal Highness Princess Basma inquires from officials in Qawairah about the charitable organisations in the area (Petra photo)

Princess Basma visits southern charitable societies and centres

KUWAITRAH (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, the chairwoman of the Board of Trustees of Queen Alia Jordan Social Welfare Fund (QAJSWF) Friday visited charitable societies and social services centres in Kuwaitrah, Disi, Tawaisah, Mameisher and Al Ghal on the outskirts of Aqaba.

Princess Basma discussed with local leaders and citizens the social needs of citizens in these areas, prior to preparing the necessary social development programmes and plans in cooperation with the local councils and committees in the district.

Princess Basma said her visit was aimed at getting first-hand information of the social services available and required for people in these areas in a bid to develop such services and prepare new programmes and formulas for future cooperation among the various voluntary organisations.

In a statement to the Jordanian News Agency, Petra, Princess Basma said she felt that people were full of enthusiasm for participating in all local community development programmes.

She pointed out that the QAJSWF was planning a number of programmes aimed at improving the welfare of women and children through creating income generating projects by training women in skills and crafts capable of winning them more income.

Princess Basma also visited a number of kindergartens in the district.

APU asks U.N. to implement resolutions on Palestine, protect workers in Kuwait

AMMAN (J.T.) — The 21st meeting of the Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) which was concluded in Algiers has appealed to the United Nations Organisation to provide protection for Palestinians and Jordanians working and living in Kuwait in the wake of the Iraqi withdrawal, and said that Arab governments bear serious responsibility in this matter.

A final statement issued at the end of the meetings in which Jordan and other Arab countries participated through parliamentary teams, urged the United Nations to ensure the settlement of the U.N. Security Council resolutions on Palestine.

The settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict should entail a full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to determine their own future, said the final statement which came after two days of meetings.

The participants called on the world organisation to convene an international conference as soon as possible in order to implement Security Council resolutions and decided to set up a special committee to deal with the question of Soviet Jewish immigration to Palestine.

The committee will follow up the matter and bring to the attention of the Arab governments the dangers inherent in the continuation of this immigration which, the final statement said, constituted a grave danger to Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq.

With reference to the situation in the Gulf in the wake of the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, the statement said that the U.S. was pursuing its acts of war against an Arab country in order to protect Israel's interests and ensure hegemony on the oil wealth of the Arab World.

The Arab parliamentarians warned the Arabs and Muslims and the world at large of the continued show of arrogance on the part of the American and NATO alliance, and stressed the need for Arab parliaments to deal with this issue immediately.

The statement condemned the present system at the Security Council which granted the superpowers hegemony over the world's affairs, serving the objectives and interests of Zionism. The participants urged the Arab governments and parliaments to work towards the establishment of a new world order based on justice and right and not on unjust resolutions that enable superpowers to destroy small countries as America did to the Iraqi people.

The statement also urged Islamic and Arab countries which aligned themselves behind the United States to reconsider their position and to support just Arab causes.

Symposium on environment presents several proposals

AMMAN (J.T.) — A five-day national symposium on environmental education organised by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) ended in Amman Thursday with a final statement offering several recommendations and resolutions expected to be adopted by concerned ministries in the country.

The statement said that the symposium had adopted a five-point strategy to serve as a basis for environmental education in Jordan and one which could be implemented in cooperation with universities and other organisations.

According to the statement, these organisations could work out special programmes dealing with environmental education, benefiting various sectors of the population.

These programmes should aim to spread awareness among children in particular about means of safeguarding the environment and should provide scientific information to enable citizens to protect the environment from pollution.

The programme, according to the statement, should introduce special curricula and school textbooks that advocate means of protecting the environment so that children could contribute towards their country's development.

The statement said that members of the public in general ought to be oriented on means of protecting the environment from pollution through special programmes that could be presented through the media and specifically on radio and television.

It said that special cadres of the public must receive specific training in matters of guiding the public in this affair and in taking active part in the implementation of national programmes designed to protect the environment.

The statement underlined the importance of international cooperation in this regard through the exchange of information, joint research work and conferences.

It said that every Jordanian should bear the responsibility of protecting the environment because by so doing citizens would be protecting themselves from danger.

The participants reviewed several working papers with particular focus on one submitted by Dr. Sufian Al Tal, director of the Environment Department at the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment.

The paper covered the question of contamination to soil, atmosphere and water resources and proposed several measures to be adopted to protect them from pollution.

Representatives of the ministries of education, health, information, agriculture, tourism, industry and trade as well as the ministry of municipal and rural affairs and the environment took part in the meeting.

Other delegates taking part represent the Jordanian universities, the armed forces, the Royal Scientific Society, the Royal Society for the Preservation of Nature and the Jordanian Society for Fighting Pollution, the Natural Resources Authority, the Higher Council for Science and Technology and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Deputies return from Turkey

AMMAN (Petra) — A parliamentary delegation returned to Amman Thursday following a visit to Turkey where its members held meetings with Turkish Parliamentarians. Discussions during the meetings focused on the Gulf crisis, according to Dr. Ishaq Al Farhan who led the group. He was accompanied by Ali Al Faqir, Fuad Khalafat and Faysal Shawabkeh.

Envoy to Luxembourg presents credentials

BRUSSELS (Petra) — Jordan's ambassador to Belgium has presented his credentials to the Duke of Luxembourg as non-resident ambassador of Jordan in that country. In presenting the credentials, the ambassador, Sataat Al Hassan expressed Jordan's desire to bolster ties with European countries and explained the difficulties the Kingdom was facing as a consequence of the Gulf crisis. Hassan also conveyed to the leaders of Luxembourg His Majesty King Hussein's endeavours to bring about peace in the Middle East.

Sarairh inspects oil tanker

AQABA (Petra) — Transport and Telecommunication Minister Jamal Al Sarairh Friday inspected the Jordanian oil tanker 'Azrak', which docked in Aqaba two days ago. The tanker was loaded with 97,000 tonnes of crude oil from the Yemeni port of Ras Issa. The government and the National Shipping Lines (NSL) bought this tanker early last month for \$7.6 million to help partly offset the shortage of oil following the bombing of Jordanian tankers carrying petrol from Iraq to Jordan. Director of the NSL's operations department, Mustafa Massad, said this was the first Jordanian ship in the area of importing oil by ships. Massad added that the Yemeni authorities have provided the necessary facilities to speed up the loading of the tanker. He pointed out that the tanker's captain and crew were all Jordanian and that the tanker could serve as a floating oil reservoir in case there is a need for it in the future.

Gulf Peace Team expresses sorrow

AMMAN (J.T.) — From Friday onwards, the Gulf Peace Team will be holding a daily silent vigil outside the United Nations office in Amman, from 12:00 to 12:30 p.m. Five members of the team are also beginning a water-only fast. This vigil and fast are undertaken in sorrowful remembrance of the tragedy of the Gulf war, and in demand of immediate action by the world community to achieve a just and peaceful solution to all outstanding problems of international relations and human rights in the region.

Ramadan, astronomically, starts March 17

AMMAN (Petra) — Secretary of the Jordanian Astronomy Amateurs Society Imad Mujahed said Friday the month of Ramadan will start on March 17. According to astronomical calculations the crescent of the moon can be seen after 10.41 p.m. on Jan. 16, making March 17 the first day of the holy month, he said.

Abu Taleb thanks Jordan National Bank

AMMAN (Petra) — Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fathi Abu Taleb Wednesday sent a letter of thanks and appreciation to the Jordan National Bank Co. board of directors for extending a JD 20,000 donation to the People's Army.

Sqour inspects nurseries

KARAK (Petra) — Director of Social Development in Karak Governorate Saleh Sqour Thursday inspected the various nurseries in the governorate and was briefed on the services they offer to children in the governorate. At a meeting with heads of these nurseries, Sqour stressed the importance of providing financial and educational resources to ensure the psychological, mental and physical development of children and upgrading the performance of nursery staff in the fields of health, supervision, and preparation of programmes drawn up for children. Sqour noted that the nurseries were originally set up to provide protection and care for pre-school children, because this stage constitutes the basis for shaping the child's behaviour, values, trends and enhancing genuine belonging. There are eight nurseries in Karak governorate which were founded by both the private and public sectors.

Sharari sends memo to PM

AMMAN (Petra) Lower House of Parliament member Hisham Sharari Thursday sent a memorandum to Prime Minister Muder Badran, calling on the government to conduct a feasibility study for converting Shobak Community College into a university college, attached to Mutia University. He sent another memorandum to Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Saleem Massadeh, calling on him to upgrade the Wadi Mousa and Shobak sub-districts to districts, because all requirements and conditions are met in these sub-districts.

Fakhri Kavar becomes head of Jordan Writers' Association

AMMAN (J.T.) — Fakhri Kavar was elected Friday by acclamation as President of the Jordanian Writers' Association (JWA), in succession to Abdul Rahim Omar.

The elections held Friday morning at the Professional Associations Complex, Salem Nahhas has also elected by acclamation as vice president.

The JWA's general assembly also elected Badr Abdul Haq, Ibrahim Al Absi, Mohammad Said Madihah, Mohammad Daoudieh, Sabhi Taha, Jamal Naji, Fakhir Saleh, Ihsan Ramzi and Ali Fazzaz as members of the administrative committee.

The assembly also elected Aida Najjar, Muayyad Al Attill, Radwan Mahadi, Mustafa Al Jueidi, and Mahmud Mousa for the membership committee.

The JWA met two days ago and decided to submit one list of nominees for the association's administrative committee.

Following its meeting, the association issued a statement voicing support for Iraq, and pledged to do their utmost to enable the 'seed of life' which Iraq has sown to flourish and to see the sun.

They also said they would encourage the democratic approach, protect democracy and foil any attempts aimed at annihilating it.

They called for encouraging a democratic approach in all the Arab World, saying that it was the only way out of foreign domination and hegemony on the Arab Nation and Arab resources.

The statement hailed the honourable and firm stand of the Jordanian armed forces, which stood by their Arab brethren in the face of the attempts and plans aimed at seizing Arab land and Arab wealth.

The statement noted the Jordanian army's defence of the Arab land in Palestine and the Golan Heights in Syria.



Fakhri Kavar
Arab wealth.

Khouri becomes chairman of Association of Banks

AMMAN (J.T.) — The general assembly of the Association of Banks in Jordan had its twelfth meeting at which elections were held for the new board of directors. These elections are held every three years.

The new members elected were Mr. Zuhair Khouri, chairman, director-general of the Housing Bank, Dr. Raja'i Muasher, chairman, director-general of the Business Bank, Dr. Abdul Rahman Toqan, general manager of National Bank of Jordan, Fakhri Bilbeisi, general manager of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, Nizar Jardaneh, chairman of Jordan Investment and Finance Bank, Faysal Abu-Elinein, general manager of Bank of Jordan and Jawad Hadeed, deputy chairman, general manager of Arab Banking Corporation / Jordan.

After the meeting of the general assembly, the new board of directors met and elected Mr. Zuhair Khouri as chairman of the new board, and Dr. Abdul Rahman Toqan as deputy chairman.



Zuhair Khouri

Oil wells

(Continued from page 1)

executives said.

The allies had also caused varying degrees of damage, from minor to total loss, to as many as 13 of 18 important oil gathering facilities around the country, they said.

In northern Kuwait near Iraq the allies had destroyed collection stations number 17, 18 and 16, "possibly due to military objectives," said Mr. Yaseen. KOC general superintendent for oil reservoirs.

He said he could not understand some damage to other oil installations caused by allied bombing.

"I have seen it with my naked eyes... air attacks on Kuwaiti gathering centres with no military stations, no military equipment. This is a puzzle we have tried to solve," he said.

KOC industrial superintendent Bader Al Khashti said repairs to tank farms and efforts to put out the wellhead fires could not start before Iraqi mines and booby traps had been cleared.

He could not say how long that would take but hoped it would be done soon.

"We are waiting for explosives experts to enter the area... there

are unexploded bombs, booby traps, everything," he said.

Ali Al Qabandi, KOC general superintendent of budget and costs, said getting oil and gas supplies for domestic consumption has the top priority.

"Our prime objective is getting the country back on its feet... as fast as possible."

Kuwait produced almost two million barrels a day before the Iraqi invasion.

Asked when he expected Kuwait to resume exports Mr. Yaseen declined to be specific but added: "We don't want to see Kuwait, which has been a major oil exporter, become a major oil importer."

Aziz

(Continued from page 1)

helicopters. But they are now present in larger numbers than before the ceasefire," Mr. Aziz said.

"Iraq considers this presence a violation of the ceasefire. This American force should leave our land immediately and stop all provocative activities."

"This behaviour on the part of America demonstrates ill-intention and non-adherence to pledges," Mr. Aziz added.

He also accused American pilots of continuing or overfly Iraqi airspace, including Friday morning.

A senior British official said Friday that ceasefire talks between Iraqi and coalition military leaders were expected to take place on Saturday.

The talks would be held at a "military installation" somewhere in Iraq, he said, without giving details.

U.S. soldiers killed six Iraqi soldiers and wounded six in a shootout at a checkpoint in southern Iraq Friday, military spokesman said.

The troops stopped two buses full of Iraqi soldiers at 2 a.m. (2300 GMT Thursday). While they were questioning those in the first bus, Iraqis in the second opened fire, U.S. spokesman Brigadier General Richard Neal told a briefing.

One bus was destroyed and the U.S. troops, from the 24th armoured division, took 90 Iraqi prisoners-of-war, Gen. Neal said. No Americans were hurt, he said.

The Iraqi death toll was given by Saudi spokesman Colonel Ahmad Al Robayan.

Gen. Neal said U.S. troops were on the alert for any violations of the informal ceasefire in force since Thursday morning.

"Our forces are in defensive positions and are prepared to transition to offensive combat immediately should the need arise," he said.

Saddam

(Continued from page 1)

In another country "is something President Bush would want to take up with the coalition partners."

One U.S. official said, however, "if Saddam did decide to leave, Algeria is one of a handful of places that might be willing to take him."

A U.S. State Department official confirmed that the American embassy in Algiers has been asked to make inquiries of the Algerian government about the report.

Israel

(Continued from page 1)

occupied West Bank, and a leaflet signed by a previously unknown group accused her of collaboration with Israeli authorities.

Arab reports identified her as Basma Abdul Kader, 35, of Nabulus.

A leaflet signed by a group calling itself "The Attacking Doves" accused Mrs. Abdul Kader of helping Israeli intelligence agents and claimed responsibility for the killing, the reports said.

The army confirmed the death and said police were investigating.

Also Friday, the army lifted its curfew on all West Bank cities and towns to allow Muslims to attend Friday prayers. It was the first time all Muslims were allowed to pray since the curfew was imposed at the start of the Gulf war on Jan. 17.

In the Gaza Strip, however, city and town residents were confined to their homes, except in small northeastern agricultural settlements.

In Jerusalem on Friday, about 14,000 people attended prayer services at the Al Aqsa mosque, Israel Radio said.

It was the largest attendance since the beginning of the war. Police said security had been increased to ensure there were no incidents. None were reported.

JNRCS sends 11th mission to Iraq

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) has just sent its 11th humanitarian mission to Baghdad carrying a consignment of relief supplies to the victims of the Gulf war, according to JNRCS vice president Mohammad Al Hadid.

Hadid said that the 28-member mission groups doctors, nurses and other technicians who would provide medicine and children's food to the Iraqi people through the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.

A total of 33 tonnes of food and medical equipment and medicine donated by the people of Salt to the people of Iraq went with the mission which left Thursday evening, Hadid noted.

Hadid said that the JNRCS was ready to organise other missions and was willing to channel all the contributions received from the public to the Iraqi organisation, which is in charge of providing humanitarian affairs.

The JNRCS had earlier dispatched other missions. During the Gulf crisis, it organised for mail and relief supplies to reach stranded foreign nationals in Iraq.

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A new tomorrow!

NOW THAT the guns in the Gulf have fallen silent and the ceasefire seems to be taking hold, attention is now directed to post war political settlements for the problems of the entire Gulf and Middle East region. Over and above the terms of the ceasefire that the antagonists will have agreed on, there is a broad spectrum of issues and conflicts in this area that remain unresolved and await immediate attention. The conclusion of the war has not settled these pressing issues and in more than one way left many questions totally unanswered. The most immediate differences that require resolution is of course the Iraqi-Kuwaiti outstanding issues whose settlement U.N. Security Council resolution 660 called for. It will be recalled that operative paragraph 3 of that resolution called on Kuwait and Iraq to enter into immediate negotiations concurrently with the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. Iraq has been steadily called upon by the allied powers to respect and implement all the council's resolutions and there is no better place to begin such a commitment than here. A good test of the sincerity of the belligerent countries about the need to observe and implement all Security Council resolutions on the Gulf is the very conflicts that precipitated the war. Stability and security in the Gulf would necessarily envisage good neighbourly relations between all the countries of that region especially between Iraq and Kuwait. Now that Iraq has renounced any future designs or claims on Kuwait, the emirate is duty bound to reciprocate this historic move by an equally generous policy decision towards its neighbour that would ensure lasting harmonious and brotherly relations between them. All efforts must now be exerted to put the past behind us as soon as possible. The Gulf war was a terrible tragedy that should never have occurred. Many mistakes were committed by more than one party, and the end result was a catastrophic bloodletting and destruction that the countries of the region could ill afford. Nevertheless, what happened has happened, and we need more than ever at this stage is to work hard at containing damage. Even more important than material reconstruction is the political, economic and psychological repair between not only the warring governments but also between their respective peoples. After all they are first and foremost one people and will remain so no matter what happened between them through the intervention of third parties and foreign forces. It is perhaps premature to think in terms of another Arab summit for establishing new foundations for future Arab cooperation and coordination but the Arab countries must most certainly begin to think along these lines as soon as possible.



ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AI RA'I ARABIC daily Friday called for the re-construction of bridges of understanding among Arab states, and said that King Hussein's call for unity of ranks within the Arab World is essential for a bright Arab future. The paper said that King Hussein's call channelled through Arab ambassadors to Jordan last Friday should be given priority, and inter-Arab cooperation is a must at this juncture in Arab history. The Arabs ought to open a new chapter in their relations and should by no means allow others to decide their future for them, said the paper. Solidarity is now number one priority in future common action among Arab countries because without solidarity, disunity and dismemberment of the Arab World can only lead to further catastrophes, the paper added. The paper called for healing of wounds caused by Gulf crisis, and said that only through Arab efforts can the Arab World become healthy again and again capable of confronting the common challenges. The paper said that Jordan was looking forward to a brighter Arab future in which solidarity and unity among Arab ranks can play the key role in the struggle for the establishment of a lasting peace. The paper said that the Arabs can adapt themselves to the new world order through united ranks; and can best achieve their objectives through stronger determination and self-confidence.

A columnist in AI Ra'i daily says that a military success cannot be interpreted as a political victory for any side in the Gulf war; and the Iraqi withdrawal of forces from Kuwait should not be considered as a defeat, since the self-confident Iraqi leadership can now transform this move into a political victory. Fahd Fanek reminds his readers of the Vietnam war in which the Americans dropped thousands of tonnes of explosives on the Vietnamese people, killing hundreds of thousands of them, only to lose the battle politically and militarily. The writer says that Vietnam had fought for 10 whole years in order to attain liberation, and had faced all odds in order to deal defeat to the American invaders. Iraq's people and armed forces withstood the onslaught of a superpower, and the weapons of the NATO alliance working hand in hand with the Israeli enemy at a time when it had counted on help from Arab regimes which never came, says Fanek. But it must be understood that the Iraqis cannot hold out indefinitely after losing so much, and after realising that everyone else had failed them.

View from Amman

Shattered myths

By Kamel S. Abu Jaber

ONE of the most important, and perhaps terrible lessons that the world should learn from the 1990-91 Gulf crisis is that one should only depend on oneself and on oneself alone. The crisis shattered many myths, some on the international and others on the regional level. The most sobering and telling are those exploded myths on the regional level: The myth of Arab and the myth of Islamic brotherhood and solidarity. When the chips were down, Iraq was left alone to grapple with forces way beyond its means not only militarily but politically and otherwise as well. For exactly 210 days between Aug. 1, 1990 and Feb. 28, 1991 when finally the ceasefire was arranged, Iraq was left in a death struggle all alone. Neither Arab nor Islamic sentiment nor neighborliness moved anyone; no nation with very few exceptions, notably Jordan, was willing to even utter a word. Arab and Islamic silence was both roaring and deadly.

Iraq should have withdrawn from Kuwait immediately after it invaded it. We in Jordan kept hammering on this point while also pleading that there were other ways to achieve this withdrawal without destroying Iraq. Before anyone else, we became aware of the trap that Iraq was being led into and we warned: We warned Arabs and Muslims on both sides of the western divide. As if hypnotised, neither we nor anyone else were able to stop moving in the direction of the trap. The plan was too clever, too comprehensive and so well laid out, its execution was not only bold but almost barbaric in its surgical operation: certainly without anesthesia and definitely without mercy.

My Circassian friend warned, "never depend on your friend when you wish to fight with the bear." How true. For, when the struggle began, the ranks of the onlookers, cheerers-on and bookies swelled, while those who earlier gave encouragement

became strangely silent. Iraq, a country about the size of the state of California and with a population of about 16.7 million people stood alone against the thirty countries of the so-called alliance with a population totalling about 950 million. Militarily other nations, in addition to those in the alliance contributed, one way or another, to the attack against Iraq. The United States, Britain and France, all members of the United Nations Security Council were in on the kill while the Soviet Union and China suddenly became law abiding and mushroomed into full-fledged democracies fighting for the United Nations charter and the application of international law. Never in the history of man have stranger bedfellows come together. And in the meanwhile Shamir, happy with the results in smiling.

And why not? For Shamir got someone else to do his "smiting" for him while still someone else who is supposed to be on the other side was paying for it. Truly the Lord works in mysterious ways.

The age of the new international disorder is upon us brought about by the western culture of violence whose coin and currency is the use of force. Colonialism, indeed the arrogant imperial mentality has not left the world: the western world. What happened since the end of the Second World War is not the liberation of the "wretched masses" of humanity as Franz Fanon put it, but the maintenance of colonialism by other means. In the jargon of Third World intelligentsia, the phenomenon is referred to as Neo-Colonialism. What it really means, for those in the "know", is that the pink faces simply transferred their soldiers from bases in the area to ships and troop carriers in the seas around it, or simply to bases in their home countries always ready

to strike at us at the least provocation.

If the west is, or appears now, a friend to some of us, it is at best a very dangerous one, and it is certainly lethal. This is the reality of the world in which we live now and it seems also the shape of the world to come. Who is next on the hit list? Who in the area looks like he stands on his feet?

That is the shape of the world to come: the so-called new world order which is really nothing but the old order made uglier. The mask has dropped and a new energy has been released on the world. We have to live with it; we have to learn to cope with it, contain it and tame and humanise it if possible. For the Zionist West may be efficient technologically and in the industry of death, but still in need of taming that wild and violent strain in it; that return to the savage nature revealed at the least provocation. And we must brace ourselves as the job may take generations. Since the advent of the Protestant movement, and its latter-day wedding to the capitalist and the industrial revolutions, the Zionists have succeeded in awakening the most primitive and aggressive traits in the human nature of the west. That is the true meaning of converting western civilisation to the so-called Judeo-Christian civilisation. We have a hard and difficult task ahead of us and we must go about it methodically and with patience. Like an amoral mischievous child, his spirit inflated with hatred by Zionism, the west is playing with over-sized toys of mass destruction: our destruction. Somehow we must counter that call to the wild in the western heart and believe in the possibility of teaching it that there are limits to the use of force. The west knows how to live in war and our challenge will be how to teach it to live in peace.

Arabs to tell Baker it's time to tackle Arab-Israel conflict

By Patrick Worsnip
Reuters

CAIRO — Arab countries will tell U.S. Secretary of State James Baker next week that after the end of the Gulf war it is high time to tackle the Arab-Israeli conflict, diplomats say.

But the message during Baker's Middle East tour may be more rhetorical than real.

Some Arab governments are quietly resigned to little progress for some time on a problem which has defied peace efforts for so long, the diplomats said.

The Arab allies — the Gulf states, Egypt and Syria — will be anxious to cash in both politically and literally on their risky involvement in the war, which stopped on Thursday morning Iraqi troops withdrew from Kuwait.

"To postpone the (Palestinian) issue would be to render it explosive, to put it off after dealing so effectively with the Gulf crisis, would be an unforgivable shame," said Ashraf Ghorbal, a former Egyptian ambassador to

Washington.

U.S. President George Bush, claiming victory in the war, said Baker would tour the region to "meet the challenge of securing the peace." His itinerary was not immediately announced.

Many diplomats believe Arab states will push at the United Nations for fresh action on Israel's occupation of Arab lands — no less illegal, in their view, than Iraq's seizure of Kuwait and requiring just as tough a response from the Security Council.

Two long-standing Security Council resolutions, 242 and 338, demand Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories.

The allies "have been very efficient in implementing Security Council resolutions (against Iraq), so we have to remind the world that these two resolutions have been adopted long ago, and we look and wait to see how they are going to be implemented," Jordan's Information Minister Ibrahim Izzeddin said.

Nevertheless, many Arab officials are privately sceptical about

the prospects for quick movement. They believe the Gulf war has set back a solution even further.

The scepticism is shared in western capitals.

bog down once again on the seemingly irreconcilable positions of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

They said Israel is bound to argue, especially if Saddam Hus-

The allies "have been very efficient in implementing Security Council resolutions (against Iraq), so we have to remind the world that these two resolutions have been adopted long ago, and we look and wait to see how they are going to be implemented" — Information Minister Ibrahim Izzeddin said.

Baker himself appeared to head off great expectations from his trip when he said: "You are not going to make progress on Arab-Israeli peace unless the parties themselves really want to make progress."

Diplomatic analysts believe any new peace drive is likely to

seem remains leader of Iraq, that the Gulf war only goes to show that Arab governments are undemocratic and dangerous; and that the PLO has ruled itself out of the game by backing Baghdad.

Western officials say Washington has already indicated it is unlikely to put pressure on Israel

to attend an international peace conference, rejected by the Israelis but supported by most other countries.

Alternative approaches include peace negotiations between Israel and its neighbours Syria and Jordan, and talks with non-PLO Palestinians — almost non-existent — about autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Both ideas have been touted for years without result.

"It may be that the Americans can make enough of an effort to be seen to be doing about as much as they possibly could. But the Arab in the street won't understand that," one diplomat said.

Diplomats said that in the present climate, Egypt, which has made its own peace with Israel and whose 35,000-man contingent in the multinational force fought solidly against Iraq, was likely to play a pivotal role in future peace efforts.

"It's just too big and it's done too well to be a secondary play-

er," a Cairo-based diplomat said. The Syrian government, despite backing the alliance, is still seen in Washington as basically anti-western, Arab analysts said.

Egyptian officials say they are not necessarily insisting on a Middle East conference at present. They are focussing their attention instead on efforts to set up an Arab security system.

The core of this is expected to consist of Egypt, Syria and the six Gulf Cooperation Council States. Their foreign ministers will meet in Damascus on March 5 and may draw up the framework of a new pact of the post-Gulf war era.

But Egypt's mass-circulation daily Al-Akhbar said on Thursday the Palestinian question had to be solved before a security organisation was formed to protect the Middle East.

"If it remains unsolved, then 20 Saddams, not one Saddam, will appear and the region will be characterised by instability and coups," commentator Mustafa Amin wrote.

Will France have independent policy after end of war?

By Francois Raitberger
Reuters

PARIS — France, a close U.S. ally in the Gulf war, will reassert its independence and press Washington for a comprehensive Middle East settlement now the fighting is over, officials say.

Even before Thursday's ceasefire was announced, President Francois Mitterrand said that cracks appeared over during the war were likely to resurface.

"In the debate for peace... we shall propose the objectives that we think fairest, and no-one is going to give us orders," he said this week.

Before the war, Mitterrand antagonised the United States by proposing an international conference — long resisted by Washington — on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Palestinian problem and other Middle East issues.

But France, which left NATO's military wing 24 years ago to pursue an independent defence policy, has rarely been as close militarily to the United States as during the war when its 14,000 troops fought under U.S. control. "The war has revitalised friendly feelings between France and the United States. There is no problem any more," Defence Minister Pierre Joxe said.

Basking in U.S. praise for the French role in helping U.S. forces outflank Iraqi defences, Mitterrand is expected to try to convince President George Bush that only an international conference can bring a lasting Middle East peace.

France has long called for such a gathering. The United States has been cool to the idea, although Bush said the end of the war could open the way to a potentially historic peace.

Within hours of the ceasefire, Foreign Minister Roland Dumas left for talks in Washington and politicians urged Mitterrand to

take bold steps to solve Middle East problems.

"France, the last country to put forward peace proposals before the war, must now be the first to call for a balanced peace," Michel Vauzelle, president of the national assembly's foreign affairs commission, said.

Conservative former Prime Minister Jacques Chirac said France's historical links with the Middle East — Syria and Lebanon were under French mandate between the two world wars — singled it out for a prominent role in the region.

Vauzelle, Mitterrand's former spokesman, said the United Nations should be the forum for the search for peace.

"The Mitterrand plan, which stressed that an urgent solution to the Palestinian problem was indispensable, must absolutely be placed on the table again," he said.

Francois Heisbourg, director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, said: "France, like other 'European' countries, will want to put the Palestinian problem top of the agenda. This is an area of possible differences."

The attitude of the United States, the only country that could pressure Israel into direct talks with Palestinians, would be crucial, he said.

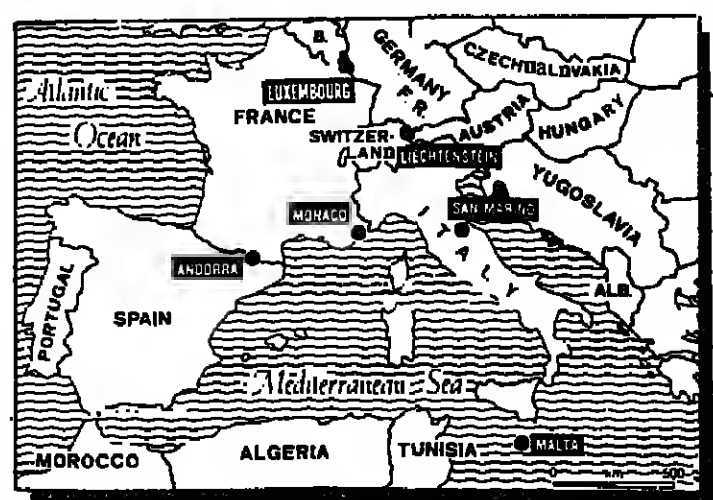
Analysts said differences between the allies would resurface as their national and regional interests assumed priority again.

France, for instance, is especially eager to mend fences with its former North African colonies where demonstrators have called Mitterrand a murderer for fighting Iraq.

Mitterrand said in an interview with the Dutch magazine Elsevier on Thursday that apart from the Israeli-Arab and Palestinian problems, a Middle East settlement should cover the issues of Lebanon, controls on arms sales, regional disarmament, redistribution of resources and post-war reconstruction.

Vauzelle proposed a conference on security and cooperation in the Mediterranean looking at the economic problems of Arab states in what he called "the Euro-Mediterranean area."

With the Soviet, France was among Iraq's main arms suppliers, and Vauzelle said the U.N. had to find a way to exclude arms sales from free world trade.



28 nations line up to cash in

By Ruth Sinai
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Each of the countries that took part in fighting Iraq, along with some important ones that sat out the Gulf war, is jockeying for position on the crowded post-war playing field.

What they're seeking reflects their disparate interests.

Saudi Arabia wants "to be left alone to enjoy their wealth and peace," said Michael Mandelbaum of the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

The Saudis, who called in the United States to "defend" them after Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, want the allies to leave soon because Muslims view the foreign presence as defiling their holiest sites in Saudi Arabia.

"But they want a U.S. presence on the horizon," probably in Kuwait and aboard ships in the Gulf, said Daniel Pipes of the Philadelphia-based Foreign Policy Research Institute.

The Saudis want Iraq led by a non-threatening, moderate government, analysts say.

Egypt's aims are similar. Like the Saudis, Egypt wants the United States to press Israel into ceding occupied lands to the Arabs and Palestinians.

"They feel their Arab nationalist credentials were tarnished by their siding with the United States. Now they want to prove to their critics that the alliance can benefit the Palestinians," said Pipes.

Egypt risked domestic unrest to fight Iraq. Now it wants the Saudis to show gratitude by sharing their oil wealth. It also wants to strengthen its role as a leader of the Arab World, possibly by sending forces to keep the peace between Iraq and Kuwait, analysts say.

The tiny, oil-rich Gulf states — Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates — want a greater U.S. role in the region to

protect them. Until now, these countries had secret military agreements with the United States. Analysts predict they'll be more open about the cooperation.

'They feel their Arab nationalist credentials were tarnished by their siding with the United States. Now they want to prove to their critics that the alliance can benefit the Palestinians.'

Syria's President Hafez Assad nimbly leaped aboard the allied bandwagon to replace his crumbling alliance with the Soviet Union. Assad, a bitter foe of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, wants him removed from power. Assad also is seeking improved ties with the West, which has shunned him as a sponsor of Palestinian terrorism, and financial aid from Saudi Arabia.

He has already benefited. The United States looked the other way last fall when Syria effectively took control of large chunks of Lebanon, said Mandelbaum.

In Turkey, President Turgut Ozal wants to cash in on his support for the coalition, which he undertook in defiance of his top aides and public sentiment. He'd like the European Economic Community to consider Turkey for membership, and he wants increased financial aid from the United States.

Some analysts believe Ozal is eyeing northern Iraq, to which Turkey staked a claim in the 1920s, and would make a grab for that oil-rich region if Iraqi President Saddam Hussein were

ousted and a power vacuum ensued.

Britain, France, Italy and Germany "want contracts to rebuild Kuwait, and a free flow of oil," said Mandelbaum.

In addition to what the Europeans want, the United States wants a pro-western or at least a neutral government in Baghdad, and a balance of power between Iran and Iraq.

The Soviet Union, although not a fighting member of the coalition, sided with the allies politically. "What they care about is being in the club, not outside," said John Steinbruner, director of foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution private research group.

Although consumed by internal problems, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev wants a say in the post-war Gulf region and a reduced role for the United States.

Some analysts believe Gorbachev, under pressure from domestic conservatives and military hardliners, wants to save Saddam Hussein so the Kremlin can resume its role as Iraq's main arms supplier and act as a powerbroker in the region.

Outside the coalition are some distinct winners and losers. Palestinians, having sided wholeheartedly with Saddam for his championship of their cause, lost the financial support of the Gulf states and their hard-won political backing from Washington.

Iran, without effort, saw its biggest rival greatly weakened. Its neutrality in the conflict also eased its international isolation, led to warmer ties with France and the Soviet Union, and even raised the possibility of a dialogue with the United States.

Iran wants the United States to leave the region.

Israelis worry about the price the might have to pay: U.S. and allied pressure to give up occupied territory to make room for a Palestinian state and to achieve peace with Syria.

هذا من الازل

PLO says smashing Iraqi economy was crime against humanity

SYDNEY (R) — The smashing of Iraq's economic infrastructure during the Gulf war was a crime against humanity for which the United States should pay reparations, a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official said Friday.

"The United States and Britain's destruction of the economic, historic and civilian infrastructure of Iraq is a crime against humanity, nothing short of the barbaric Mongol invasion and sacking of Iraq in the 12th century," Ali Kazak, the PLO's representative in Australia, told reporters.

"The United States must now pay reparations and assist in the rebuilding of what its destructive war machine has destroyed," he said.

"Similarly, there was no reason or excuse for Iraq's destruction of the economic infrastructure of Kuwait, the burning of its oil wells, refineries and public buildings," he said. "It is an Arab loss which also must be condemned."

Mr. Kazak said the West had tried to distort the PLO position during the crisis, misrepresenting PLO leader Yasser Arafat as a supporter of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

"From the outset of the Gulf crisis, President Arafat, among other Arab leaders, worked

tirelessly for a peaceful Arab solution which would secure an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait," Mr. Kazak said.

"History will show how the U.S. sabotaged all Arab attempts for a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis."

Mr. Kazak said the United States now had no choice but to address the utmost urgency of the Palestinian question in all its aspects if it was to have any credibility left in the Arab and Muslim World.

"People over there (in the Middle East) are extremely angry and are going to be very frustrated if there is no solution to the problems of the area," he said.

He said the war, far from being a setback for the Palestinian cause, had had several beneficial effects.

"Certainly it has highlighted the Palestine question more," he said.

"It has highlighted to the Israelis that there is no security for them while maintaining their occupation (of Arab territories) and refusing and rejecting to coexist with the Palestinians."

"So therefore I'm sure there are lots of Israelis now starting to think again and they realise that... they cannot close their eyes and wish the Palestinian nation would disappear."

Pakistani premier says his position vindicated

ISLAMABAD (R) — Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said Friday the outcome of the Gulf war vindicated his stand against Iraq, which brought him widespread criticism in Pakistan.

"Certainly we feel vindicated and I think that our policy was based on principle. It was a just and correct policy and we have no regrets," he told an airport news conference on his return from a four-day visit to China.

Pakistan sent 11,000 soldiers to Saudi Arabia after several weeks of hesitation and in spite of a wave of popular anger against the U.S.-led forces.

Army Chief General Mirza Aslam Beg joined the anti-American movement in a fiery speech at the end of January that created a major row in the government, political sources said.

Pakistan would like to join in the reconstruction of Kuwait but was in no hurry to join the headlong rush of the West to secure the spoils of victory, Mr. Sharif said.

Pakistan has made clear it

wants to be part of the post-war regional security arrangement in the Gulf. Mr. Sharif said nothing had been agreed with the Saudi and Kuwaiti governments.

Since Washington cut off aid to Pakistan in October because of worries about its nuclear programme, China has increasingly been seen as Islamabad's most reliable non-Islamic ally.

Mr. Sharif said his visit had been very successful with both sides agreeing to step up defence and economic cooperation.

"China had agreed to transfer defence technology, he said, but declined to say whether it had offered missile technology. China, which is keen to boost its arms sales, already provides tanks and aircraft and is helping Pakistan to develop its own main battle tank.

Before leaving Beijing, Information Adviser Sheikh Rashid Ahmad told reporters Pakistan hoped for more joint ventures and the transfer of defence technology.

Pro-Iraq and pro-Kuwait demonstrators clash in Tyre

TYRE, Lebanon (AP) — Pro- and anti-Iraq demonstrators buried stones and tomatoes of each other in a 90-minute clash in South Lebanon Friday. Police said at least three people were slightly injured. Police said the clash broke out early in the day in the village of Shakra, 10 kilometres southeast of the port city of Tyre. The clash broke out when about 40 pro-Iraq youths intercepted about 300 women, children and men who marched across the streets of Shakra to celebrate Kuwait's liberation from Iraqi occupation, the spokesman said. He said the pro-Kuwait demonstrators were forced to leave the country after Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion. About 50,000 Lebanese expatriates lived in Kuwait before the Iraqi invasion. The spokesman said the pro-Kuwait demonstrators chanted "Long live Sheikh Jaber Al Sabah, long live Kuwait." "We shall return to rebuild Kuwait," President Elias Hrawi called his congratulations to Sheikh Jaber on Kuwait's liberation "and the return of the legitimate authority to the sisterly nation," the presidential press office said.

Levy

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Levy said the United States, whose Gulf war allies included key Arab countries like Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia, was "now better placed than ever before to influence them to negotiate with Israel without preconditions."

And he believed that once even a few Arab countries opened direct negotiations with Israel, "one thing must be understood — the Palestinians will not stand at the end of the queue."

Resolution

(Continued from page 1)

Some reservists will have to stay longer because they have special skills needed to support the withdrawal, he said.

President Bush ordered a ceasefire from 0500 GMT on Thursday after a 100-hour land, sea and air offensive routed Iraqi troops and Iraq accepted all 12 resolutions on Kuwait adopted by the United Nations Security Council.

Iraq ordered compliance with the ceasefire, which was holding Friday despite a few skirmishes. The allies said that because of a communications breakdown some Iraqi troops did not know they were supposed to stop shooting.

Thousands of Iraqi soldiers were bypassed by the rapid allied advance and it may take a week

before they all come out of their defences.

Mr. Bush said he was pleased by the quick Iraqi response to his 48-hour deadline for agreement on a meeting to coordinate an exchange of war prisoners, U.S. and Kuwaiti detainees and other military aspects ahead of a formal end to the war.

The allies have also demanded that the Iraqis identify for them the location of all mines planted on land and at sea, free all detainees, return the remains of war dead and end missile attacks on Israel and Saudi Arabia.

The United States has no plan ready yet for withdrawing its nearly 540,000 forces from the Gulf, but some will be recalled "pretty soon," senior Pentagon officials said.

For weeks the United Nations has made contingency plans for peacekeeping operations in the Gulf, considering a force of anywhere from a few hundred to about 5,000 on Iraq's border with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The agenda for the talks might include the positioning of troops, rules of safe passage for travellers, information on land and sea mines, care for the sick and wounded and returning the remains of the dead.

Political issues, such as the return of prisoners of war, Iraqi war reparations to Kuwait and the establishment of a military buffer zone in southern Iraq, belong to diplomats.

Wrangling over the terms of peace, or the absence of war, can be long and rocky.

King Hussein addresses Nation 'Let us place our trust in God and turn over new page'

The following is His Majesty King Hussein's address to the nation Friday:

In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful

Brother Citizens, Brother Arabs, in all parts of the Arab World, Brother Muslims, in all parts of the world,

I send you greetings that spring from a pure Arab heart and conscience that believes in the will of God. On this historic moment I shall pause with you at two landmarks of Jordan's progress and that of the greater Arab Nation.

The first is the thirty fifth anniversary of the Arabisation of the command of our Arab Army, so that it may always remain a source of strength for our nation and people.

The second is the end of the Gulf crisis, which we sought from the outset to steer away from the dark tunnel it entered from the second of August until this day. This chapter ended at last, in one of the most cruel national disasters which our nation has ever endured. Now I address every one of you men and women, young and aged, Muslims and Christians, servicemen and civilians. I address every Arab and Muslim who lived the unfolding saga in his heart and mind, or who faced it as an inescapable reality. I address you, brother Jordanians, to tell you that we have every cause to hold our heads high. Never have we bowed before other than to Almighty God, nor will we now. Our vision was clear from the onset of the tragedy. We realised that the outcome would be if Iraq continued its occupation of Kuwait, and if we were not successful in solving the problem peacefully within the Arab framework. We tried our best to contain the problem in its early stages, and at all subsequent stages before the outbreak of war. We sought to solve it and avert disaster through our concern for the greater national interest and our commitment to noble principles. We were not successful. I do not propose to go into the details of the sad drama because you know it well. You have lived it. I would like to say that the curtain has dropped on the final act, to herald a new dawn which beckons on the horizon. I realise that many of us in Jordan and in the Arab and Muslim world will carry with them as they look forward to a new tomorrow, painful memories which can be transformed into hatred and rancour if they are allowed to grow and fester. But vibrant peoples are those that can overcome their pain and grievance, and contribute lessons from which they themselves learn as they strive for their future, their hopes, and aspirations. Dynamic nations do not allow bad memories to stall their progress or paralyse their ability to think. They emerge from the ashes and shake off the dust

having drawn strength, confidence, and determination from their bitter ordeal, to resume normal life and to construct a brighter future.

You know that, after Iraq and Kuwait, Jordan suffered most from this crisis. We were isolated economically till our exports shrank. We were placed unwillingly in the war zone till our tourism ceased and our airspace was closed. We were obliged to shoulder over and above, the responsibility of hosting Jordanian returnees who had worked in Kuwait. This entailed an additional burden to our financial and economic plight. Our standard of living was diminished. In the case of hundreds of thousands of our people, to below the poverty line. Unemployment soared to an unprecedented level. Our tankers were hit as they came from Iraq loaded with oil, without which, not only the wheels of the economy would grind to a halt, but so would our ability to provide drinking water, which requires energy to pump it from its various sources. Nevertheless, we did what we could to stay prepared to defend our country at all levels: We mobilised the armed forces, called up our reserves, equipped the people's army, and provided basic food supplies for the country. We did not, however bear a grudge towards anyone, nor did we place the blame on any. We realised that we would pay dearly for standing on principle, and maintaining our freedom of choice within a national context, and because of our geographical location.

Gloating and apportioning blame are not Arab traits, nor are they compatible with their spiritual values because they lead to enmity, hatred, and alienation. On the other hand, forgiveness and burying the past lead to healing the wounds and closing the ranks of the nation once again.

Let us place our trust in God and turn over a new leaf. Let everyone make an honest resolution to work for reconciliation and harmony, and to shun doubts, mistrust, and all causes of strife. Let us establish an inter-Arab relationship based on the fear of God, mutual trust, and faithfulness to the aspirations of our nation and its future generations to live in freedom, peace, security, and stability, so they can resume the quest for progress and fortitude, within its national character and Islamic values.

Let us turn over a new page, thanking God that the Gulf war has ended, and that the people of Kuwait enjoy their independence once again. Let us pray to God that this be the last strife between Arabs, and that he may guide them to the true path, the path of righteousness, justice, fraternity, solidarity, and affection.

As I say this a stream of images crowds my mind. Today our Kuwaiti brothers celebrate their return to their homes and the restoration of their independence. We share their happiness. By contrast, our Iraqi brothers nurse their wounds and pain. We sympathise with them all, people and army, Arabs and Kurds, Sunnis and Shi'ites, in every city, village, and bedouin camp. We all bear a responsibility towards Iraq, its heritage and history. We shall stand by the Iraqi people as they look forward to rebuilding their country and to healing their wounds. To all our brethren in Iraq we pledge that we shall neither forget them, nor the help they have given us in our moment of need.

On this day we see the beginning of a new Arab era. A new dawn between Iraq and Kuwait marked by reconciliation and reconstruction in both countries. Today, pains and sorrows turn into hope and determination. Today is a day for reflection and self-appraisal, to heal the wounds, restore Arab unity, and lay solid foundations for a better future. The nation did not start with us that it should end with us.

This is the day when we should consider how to revive and develop the Arab regional order, to make it more capable of containing our problems and facing the challenges that face our nation.

It is a day of determination for us to build our national strength, to restore confidence in ourselves and to safeguard our values and beliefs.

It is a day when all should turn to solving their problems, the border issues being at the forefront, so that the nation will never again find itself in a situation of conflict that could lead to its ruin. It is the day when serious thinking ought to commence on how our abilities should complement construction and development in a context of cooperation, to safeguard our human and natural resources and to release the potential of our nation's youth.

It is the day on which we ought to bear witness to the interrelation of interests amongst the nations of the world, the interdependence amongst its peoples, the need to live in harmony with each other, to enjoy our resources in a framework of equality and by the grace of God to fulfill the trust of future generations. On this day we should also not be impervious to the anguish

of the Palestinian Arab people, who look to the day of salvation when they too can rejoice as do the Kuwaiti people today. The Palestinian people look to a world that has applied international legality with the same vigour that it demonstrated over the question of the occupation of Kuwait, and await the same firmness and decisiveness in applying international legality to its humanitarian and national demands.

It has been said that Palestinians showed happiness when missiles hit Israel. If that is correct, should the world not analyse the cause for this happiness? I suggest to the Israeli leadership and people that they scrutinise this phenomenon closely for the Palestinians, like all living mortals, are also human, and it is humanity that constitutes their love for life, virtue and peace as it does for others. One cannot distinguish a line between this reaction to the attacks and the continued neglect by the international community of their suffering, a fact which can only have had a brutalising effect. Such "happiness" is no more than a reflection of deep seated and profound sorrow, coupled with despair of attaining international justice and of having waited so long for salvation in freedom and the right to a life with dignity.

On this day we urge the world again to address the question of Palestine by the same criteria that it has applied over the question of Kuwait. We should also like to renew our pledge to the world that we are committed to striving for the attainment of a just and durable peace that guarantees the

Let everyone make an honest resolution to work for reconciliation and harmony, and to shun doubts, mistrust, and all causes of strife. Let us establish an inter-Arab relationship based on the fear of God, mutual trust, and faithfulness to the aspirations of our nation and its future generations to live in freedom, peace, security, and stability, so they can resume the quest for progress and fortitude, within its national character and Islamic values.

national rights of the Palestinian people on their national soil. Foremost among these rights is their right to self-determination and to representation in a peace process aimed at resolving the Arab/Israeli conflict. These rights constitute the basis for the achievement of lasting peace and enduring stability in the region, a goal which we seek jointly with the international community, guided by the noblest of values and by a commitment to the application of all international principles with equal enthusiasm and dedication.

On this day we must also focus attention on the growing disparity between rich and poor nations in this region which predates con-



tinuing social and political unrest if it is not addressed institutionally through planning in order to cope with the challenges to stability in this region and to world peace, and not just as an expression of charity. In our opinion this means a great deal for it addresses the core of international dealings with our region as an integrated region rather than a series of bilateralism.

On this occasion I should also like to thank all those who helped us during this crisis and who understood and appreciated our principled stand. Our propensity for peace and our dedication to conflict resolution through peaceful means. We would like to assure the whole world that Jordan throws its arms open wide to all those who wish to establish friendly relations based on mutual respect and cooperation.

Jordan extends its hand to all those who reciprocate with warmth and honour that we may work together in the knowledge that rhetoric will yield to meaningful deeds. Jordan will always belong to its nation, will always strive for international cooperation in achieving prosperity for all. This is Jordan's longstanding belief which, God willing, it will never abandon.

Here in Jordan we are proud of our democratic experiment which in this crisis has been a foundation stone of the edifice of our national unity. It has revealed the awareness of our people, their fears for the nation's welfare and their deep concern for regional developments in a context of responsible national and patriotic participation.

I congratulate you all in progressing on the path of democracy which we shall strive to consolidate and enhance. At the outset of this new phase, as we prepare ourselves to resume the process

of reconstruction, we shall propose the national charter for national endorsement that we may, in the light of the charter, organise and, God willing, guide our participatory process with greater cooperation in the service of our country and our Arab Nation equally. Our historic national responsibilities lie in providing the elements of success for our experiment which may offer a model for our Arab brethren, in their turn, to expand their participatory process in the service of their countries.

We in Jordan are confident that the Arab peoples have a greater sense of solidarity and harmony than the recent crisis suggests. They are capable of overcoming the causes of division and fragmentation which we have always cautioned against. Popular participation in the framework of democratic institutions is the guarantor of upholding that solidarity among people just as responsible freedom and respect for human rights and human dignity are the guarantors that prevent decision-makers from following the path of adventurism.

For it is through the widespread adoption of democracy in Arab countries that we can best save our nation from the pitfalls of armed conflict. We also see in democracy a sure way of preserving harmony in the Arab Nation would lead the nation to the realisation of its hopes in interdependence, strength, progress and prosperity.

"It may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and may also be that you prefer a thing and it may be the worst for you. God knows all and you know not" (Al Baqara 216).

May God's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you.

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Kuwait looks for special OPEC oil quota

LONDON (R) — Kuwait, facing heavy spending to rebuild, will seek a special OPEC oil production quota to help pay for reconstruction, oil Minister Rashid Salem Al Ameer said in remarks published Thursday.

"Kuwait will ask the organisation to take its circumstances into account on production and prices," Ameer told the London-based Arabic language newspaper Al Hayat.

"At the last OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) meeting there were hints from some member colleagues that Kuwait had special circumstances that should be taken into consideration," he added.

Ameer cited a precedent when the 13-member oil group allowed Iraq and Iran special production quotas during their 1980-88 war. Baghdad, just before invading the emirate, accused Kuwait of economic sabotage, saying it was flooding the world oil market and driving prices down.

There has been no official estimate of the costs of putting right the damage to the tiny ultra-modern Gulf state but unofficial figures ranged from \$50 to \$100 billion.

Ameer declined to say when production would be resumed, noting that more than 300 oil wells set ablaze by Iraqis would take a long time to restore.

"We don't have a clear picture of the damage yet," he said. He estimated that Kuwait had lost \$7 billion in oil revenue since the Iraqi invasion.

British insurers lower war risk rates for Gulf cargo

LONDON (R) — London underwriters have reduced war risk rates for sea cargo to and from the Gulf, reflecting apparent lower risks in the region, an insurance industry body has said.

War risk rates for Saudi Red Sea ports, Israeli Red Sea and Mediterranean ports and Turkey were abandoned, the underwriters' War Risk Committee said. Jordan remained on the list, although at much lower rates.

The committee, representing underwriters on the Institute of London Underwriters (ILU) and Lloyd's of London insurance markets, might meet again soon and further reductions were possible, an ILU source said.

Marine war risk insurance now costs 0.0625 per cent of the cargo value to and from northern Iranian ports and points north of 27.30 degrees north in the Gulf, which includes Iran's main oil terminal on Kharg Island.

This compares with 0.25 per cent charged since Feb. 13, when the last changes were announced. Rates for southern Iranian ports and the southern Gulf were now at 0.05 per cent against a previous 0.125 per cent.

In southwestern parts of the Gulf west of 52 degrees east and including Qatar and Bahrain, rates

are now 0.125 per cent against a previous 0.5 per cent. Most air cargo rates for the Gulf were also cut to around 0.025 per cent. Previously they were "held covered" or up to 0.20 per cent.

Hull war risks, negotiated between individual underwriters and clients, have shown sharp declines recently after reaching a minimum level applicable in war situations, brokers said.

But both cargo and hull are unlikely to return immediately to pre-war levels because the Gulf region will still be classified as risky for some time, underwriters said.

Italy offers \$55m aid to Syria

DAMASCUS (AP) — Italy's state secretary for foreign affairs met Thursday with President Hafez Assad and afterward said his government was extending \$55 million in new aid to Syria. Claudio Lenoci left for Rome following the meeting.

Lenoci said Italy planned to promote economic, business and cultural relations with Syria and said the Italian government had allocated 60 billion lire (\$55 million) "to finance cooperation" over the next three years.

Most of the money was to take the form of grants, he said. "Dialogue with Syria is very important in order to establish the new stability in the area after the war is over," Lenoci said.

"Syria's attitude during the crisis has pushed things in this direction. We much appreciate Syria's role..."

Brady defends sweeping programme to reform U.S. bank industry

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady said Tuesday the Bush administration's banking reform proposals would prevent a repeat of the savings and loan crisis that is costing taxpayers billions of dollars.

Brady said the administration's proposal for banks "represents sound and prudent regulation with badly needed reforms to protect the taxpayer."

He stressed that the reforms are markedly different from the deregulation of the savings and loan banks, which ultimately led to the collapse of hundreds of institutions, requiring the U.S. government to bail out depositors at a projected cost to taxpayers of \$500 billion.

When the thrift industry was deregulated, Brady said, "we left S&L (savings and loan) owners going to the casino with Uncle Sam's chequebook in hand."

In contrast, he said, the treasury's proposals, which would be the most wide-ranging banking reforms since the depression, would allow only healthy banks to expand into such business as insurance and securities, and then only through separately capitalised affiliates.

Nevertheless, industry analysts have seen little enthusiasm in Congress for allowing banks into risky new businesses, or for allowing industrial companies to own banking subsidiaries, another provision of the administration's plan.

More support has been seen for other components of the plan, including nationwide branching and moves to bolster the dwindling bank insurance fund.

Brady emphasised the importance of not learning the wrong lesson from the thrift problem. He warned against putting off reform of the banking industry.

Gulf crisis cost airlines about \$1b in January

GENEVA (AP) — The Gulf crisis cost airlines an estimated \$1 billion in January, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said Thursday.

The industry association said scheduled air traffic was 12 per cent down on January 1990. It said Middle Eastern airlines suffered a 33 per cent fall in traffic. European airlines witnessed a 12 per cent decline and North American carriers five per cent.

But an IATA statement said there were signs that business was slowly starting to improve.

A spokesman said this assessment was based on an informal survey of advance bookings conducted among member airlines during the past ten days. He said no firm figures were yet available.

The IATA statement said worldwide financial results for 1991 were expected to be "very disappointing." It said growth in scheduled air traffic was likely to be below three to four per cent for 1991. Before the eruption of the Gulf crisis, an expansion of six to seven per cent had been predicted.

It said data received by IATA showed airline results for January were \$1 billion lower than budgeted figures. It said Middle Eastern airlines lost \$200 million compared with their targets. European carriers lost \$600 million and North American companies more than \$200 million.

About 15,400 flights scheduled for January were cancelled, some four per cent of the total. The statement said this included 5,500 by Middle Eastern airlines, 1,300 by European carriers and 1,900 by North American airlines.

The statistics do not include charter flights or freight traffic. The spokesman said IATA planned a full survey of reasons for the fall in passengers. He added that initial studies among businessmen showed economic recession and company economy drives were more important than the terrorist fears in travel cutbacks. The spokesman asked not to be identified.

Israel opens door to foreign investments in stocks

TEL AVIV (R) — The Bank of Israel has said it would permit foreign firms to raise cash on the Tel Aviv stock market through stocks and bonds.

But the amount of money a foreign firm could take out of the country would be limited to 20 per cent of any new issue.

Previously the central bank had turned down applications by foreign firms to issue shares on the stock market.

The change of policy "will make the Israeli stock market more international," Bank of Israel official Gideon Schurr said. "Now we need local investments, not Israeli investments abroad."

The bank's decision, followed requests by several foreign firms. But the bank said those firms — which were not identified — withdrew their applications after they were told they would have to invest 80 per cent of the cash in Israel.

"We may in the future make the possibility more attractive by further relaxing the limitations," Schurr told Reuters.

Travel firms said unlikely to boom as Gulf war ends

PARIS (R) — The end of the Gulf war does not signal a rapid recovery in business for Europe's airlines and leisure firms, industry analysts said Thursday.

Fear of "terrorism," roundly blamed for a 25 per cent drop in European airline traffic since war erupted on Jan. 17, would take longer to dissipate, they said.

And, some of Europe's major economies were slowing down, crimping the travel budgets of companies and individuals alike.

There will be a certain resumption of travel, but I think it will be slow," said Josette Lahon of Paris broker Puget-Mahe.

"Everyone has been concentrating on the Gulf for the last several months and they have perhaps been ignoring the effects of slowing economies across Europe," said County Natwest leisure industry analyst Julie Farrar.

France, which enjoyed solid growth for most of 1990 but saw its gross domestic product shrink for the first time in nearly four years in the fourth quarter, was an example.

"All corporate travel in the United Kingdom is being cut

back and will continue to be," said Farrar. "If France seems to be sliding into a recession, I would expect French firms to do the same."

"My feeling is we may get a small upswing in business travel as some companies that have banned employees from travelling may lift those bans," Farrar said. "I don't think they will all because of a fear of terrorism related to the Gulf."

Some analysts said the chances of "terrorist" attacks could increase and deter travellers.

"The one precedent is the U.S. bombing attack against Libya in 1986," said Christopher Will of Lehman Brothers. "It took 12 months after that for traffic on the North Atlantic to move from negative year on year comparisons to positive comparisons."

"(The Gulf war) is a much more major event with much higher probability of terrorism after the war," Will said. "Also, that (1986/87) recovery of traffic happened at time when economies on both sides of the Atlantic were far stronger than today."

David Henderson, manager of statistics for the Association of

European Airlines, said he expected business to pick up, but not by much.

"We can easily imagine the certain travel plans have been changed, that some people who might have travelled this summer may not," he added.

But Serge Trigano, managing director of French leisure group club Mediterranee, said he believed there was pent-up vacation demand and he expected a strong recovery by June.

"We estimate there will be a fantastic interest in travel for people who did not go on trips this winter," Trigano said.

At least four European carriers — Lufthansa of Germany, Air France, Olympic of Greece and Austrian Airlines — said Thursday they would resume flights to Israel suspended because of the Gulf war. Aviation officials expected others to follow as war-risk insurance rates dropped.

All foreign airlines except U.S.-based Tower Air stopped flying to Israel when insurance rates soared before the war started on Jan. 17. Israeli carrier El Al and Israel's domestic airline Arkia continued flying.

End of Gulf war unlikely to spur quick global growth

WASHINGTON (R) — The end of the Gulf war should give the world economy a shot in the arm, but it is unlikely to ignite the spending boom needed to put global growth back on a fast track, economists said Thursday.

The end of the war should usher in a period of low oil prices that will give central banks: leeway to cut interest rates to boost demand, they said.

But they warned that the upswing won't be all that robust, especially in the United States where consumers and companies remain hobbled by debt.

"The shortness of the war should be helpful" in turning the U.S. economy around, White House Press Secretary Martin Fitzwater said.

"Although the oil price collapse, many expected after the war has not occurred, prices are likely to stay low for some time, helping to kick-start the stuttering world economy."

Peter Perkins, an international

economist at the DRI/McGraw Hill think-tank in Massachusetts, said each \$10 drop in the price of oil slashes the energy bill of the world's seven leading industrial nations by \$70 billion.

It was the steep rise in oil prices to \$40 a barrel after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait last August that helped tip an already shaky U.S. economy into recession.

Lower oil prices are also good news for Japan and Europe, both of which heavily depended on supplies from the Gulf. "The war's end is an unequivocal boon for the world economy," Perkins said.

Consumer and corporate confidence, battered by the uncertainties of the war and the temporary spike in oil prices last year, should also begin to revive.

"The conclusion of the Gulf war will end the period of uncertainty which has led people to postpone decisions on investment and spending," said Stefano

Micossi of Confindustria, the Italian industry employers' association.

A survey of Americans by the Washington Post found the war has triggered an unprecedented surge in national optimism.

Jason Barn, associate economist at the Conference Board, said that at the conference, it is likely to rise when the board takes its next reading in March.

Most economists expect the U.S. downturn to end soon, largely because of the steep drop in interest rates over the past six months.

The easier monetary policy is beginning to spread from the United States and Canada to Europe, where Britain cut interest rates this week for the second time in a month. France hinted it may soon follow suit.

"All that should create a favourable climate for an economic rebound," French Finance Minister Pierre Berégovoy said.

U.S. consumer spending plunges

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. consumer spending, which collapsed in the final quarter of 1990, dropped another 0.6 per cent as 1991 began, the government said Thursday in a report suggesting the recession continued into the new year.

"Consumers are in a lot of trouble," Bryce Steinberg, an economist with Merrill Lynch Capital Markets in New York, said of the sector providing two-thirds of the nation's economic activity.

The Commerce Department said spending in January fell to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$3.72 trillion, the steepest slide since a 1.3 per cent fall in January 1987 and more than erasing a 0.5 per cent advance in December.

Economist John of Kemper Financial Services in Chicago said the decline is more evidence that the January-March period of 1991 will be the second quarterly contraction in a row.

A recession generally is defined as at least two consecutive quarters of negative growth.

The department reported Wednesday that the gross national product — the total output of the nation's goods and services — fell 0.9 per cent from October through December. That included a huge 2.9 per cent drop in consumer spending.

And while the apparent end of the Gulf war is expected to boost

consumer confidence and provide an initial boost in spending, Steinberg said only rebound is unlikely to be robust.

"The problem has been not a lack of confidence," the Merrill Lynch economist said. "The problem is that consumers don't have any money to spend."

Indeed, the Commerce Department also reported Thursday that personal incomes fell 0.5 per cent, the largest decline since a similar 0.5 per cent decline in November 1988.

Income totalled a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$4.72 trillion down from 0.6 per cent gain posted in December.

The Labour Department reported earlier that America's unemployment rate climbed to 6.2 per cent in January, its highest level since 1987.

And while there was an increase in some incomes due to a federal government pay raise and an increase in government benefit payments, it was offset by a decrease in farm subsidies and a

jump in social security withholding taxes, the Commerce Department said.

The report said Americans' disposable incomes — incomes after taxes — sank 0.5 per cent, erasing a 0.5 per cent gain the previous month.

As a result, Americans' savings rate — savings as a percentage of disposable income — edged up to 4.3 per cent in January from 4.2 per cent a month earlier.

The spending and income were not adjusted for inflation. When adjusted, spending actually fell 1.1 per cent, the biggest decline since a 2.2 per cent drop in January 1987.

Inflation-adjusted spending rose 0.4 per cent in December. Disposable incomes, when adjusted for inflation, slumped 0.9 per cent following a 0.5 per cent gain in December.

A key component of the income category — wages and salaries — fell \$14.2 billion after rising \$22.8 billion a month earlier.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Thursday, February 28, 1991
Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell	French franc	129.0	129.8
U.S. dollar	666.0	670.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	504.8	507.8
Pound Sterling	1290.4	1288.3	Dutch guilder	389.2	391.2
Deutschmark	438.9	441.5	Swedish crown	118.1	118.8
Swiss franc	508.0	511.0	Italian lira (for 100)	38.7	39.1
			Belgian franc (for 10)	212.7	214.0

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One Sterling	1.9020/30	U.S. dollar
One U.S. dollar	1.1505/15	Canadian dollar
	1.5330/37	Deutschmarks
	1.7290/7300	Dutch guilders
	1.3320/27	Swiss francs
	31.55/60	Belgian francs
	5.2220/70	French francs
	1146/1147	Italian lire
	134.15/22	Japanese yen
	5.6950/7000	Swedish crowns
	5.9950/6.000	Norwegian crowns
	5.8950/9000	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	367.00/367.50	U.S. dollars

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

SYDNEY — Bank share prices plunged following the launch of National Australia Bank's record rights issue. The All Ordinaries index ended 10.4 up at 1395.2.

TOKYO — Stocks closed sharply lower on disappointment as the end of the Gulf war failed to revive Wall Street's rally. The Nikkei index fell 327.65 to 25,881.57.

HONG KONG — After profit-taking in active trading the Hang Seng index ended up 0.23 to 3,552.37.

SINGAPORE — Despite share falls over a broad front the Straits Times industrial index rose 3.41 points to 1,462.98, helped by gains in some index component stocks.

BOMBAY — Market closed until Monday. The Bombay Stock Exchange index closed Thursday at 1,220.41, down 1.14.

FRANKFURT — "The war is over and everyone is looking at the homeland catastrophe," said Michael Reithberger, trader at Citibank. Concern about the cost of German unity sent the DAX index down 25.35 points to 1,516.74, its lowest close since 1,486.52 on Feb. 14.

PARIS — Profit-taking followed the buying spree that greeted the Gulf ceasefire. The CAC-40 index, which closed Thursday at a six-month high, fell 13.00 points to 1,746.79.

LONDON — Hopes of a cut in British interest rates limited the effect of a weaker start on Wall Street. The FTSE index gained six points to 2,386.9.

NEW YORK — Wall Street recouped early losses. At 1630 GMT the Dow Jones industrials were up 1.24 to 2,883.42.

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Cinema Tel: 634144
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Khaleda Zia's party wins 140 seats in Bangladesh elections

DHAKA (AP) — The victory of Khaleda Zia's party in parliamentary elections is a monument to the memory of her assassinated husband and the realisation of her nation's long-frustrated dreams of democracy.

With nearly all election results tallied Thursday, Mrs. Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party has an insurmountable lead in the contest for parliament's 300 seats.

Mrs. Zia, 46, has often said there would have been no need for her to enter politics if her husband, President Ziaur Rahman, were alive. But the mother of two has proved to be a savvy politician who confounded expectations by trouncing the better-organised Awami League of her rival, Sheikh Hasina.

With 294 districts reporting from Wednesday's voting, Mrs. Zia's party has 140 seats versus the Awami League's 84.

A shaken Hasina declared that "something mischievous went against us," but foreign election observers said the voting appeared to be fair.

Mrs. Zia and Hasina, who is the daughter of another assassinated president, temporarily shelved their longtime enmity last October to lead a mass protest that forced President Hussain Muhammad Ershad to resign. Ershad seized power in a 1982 coup.

Ershad, who has been under house arrest since Dec. 12 and faces trial on corruption and other charges, demonstrated he still has political clout. His Jatiya Party won 35 seats, including five that went to Ershad himself.

The former army general can keep only one of the seats, with the others put up for by-elections. Under Bangladesh law, he would automatically be stripped of the remaining seat if convicted.

Jamaat-E-Islami, a right-wing Muslim religious party, won 18 seats. Eleven others went to small-party allies of Hasina's Awami League, and six were scattered among small parties and independents.

Four seats have not yet been declared. Elections for two others were postponed when candidates died — one in campaign violence, the other of natural causes.

Mrs. Zia, a stylish mother of two sons, emerged from her hunkered-in heart of Dhaka's chief military base shortly before sundown Thursday to place a wreath on the tomb of her husband, an army general who seized power in a coup in 1976.

Gen. Zia was elected President two years later, after founding the Bangladesh Nationalist Party in an attempt to legitimise his power. He was assassinated by army officers in 1981. The party's

quest for identity flourished until 1983, when it turned to Mrs. Zia and made her a vice chairman and later chairman.

She quickly proved to be a captivating speaker who dazzled the crowds in over-populated, under-fed Bangladesh with her glamorous saris and silky complexion. She charmed Bangladeshis with pledges of democracy and enough rice for everybody.

Her party is usually vaguely described as "centrist." It adopted a slogan of "neither East nor West" and pledged to bring capitalism to Bangladesh — which might attract foreign investors but has little to offer many people in this country of 110 million.

With a per capita annual income of \$170, the city slums and the mud-but villages dotting Bangladesh's countryside are full of people who routinely go without food for a day or two because they can't earn enough money for subsistence.

Democracy is an untested concept in Bangladesh.

One of Mrs. Zia's first tasks will be to put together a government coalition in parliament, because her party fallen short of a majority of seats.

Jamaat-E-Islami, an Islamic party that is less fundamentalist than its counterparts in other

Muslim countries, has said it considers itself a natural partner for the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Some of the small parties and independents also are potential allies.

Ershad's Jatiya Party also has enough seats to play a pivotal role. Ershad himself is a political pariah at the moment, but his party has something in common with Mrs. Zia's. Both were founded in the Cantonment, as the Dhaka military base is popularly called, and both retain bulwarks of support in the army.

Retired Army Maj. Abdul Mannan, who won one of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party's seats, emphatically responded "no way" when asked about an alliance with Jatiya.

But when asked about a future with the Jatiya Party minus Ershad, Mannan said: "I think without Ershad, Jatiya would be a better party. Everybody in the Jatiya is not bad."

One option for Mrs. Zia is to give up her seat in parliament and run for the presidency, a job now held on a caretaker basis by Supreme Court Justice Shahabuddin Ahmad. This would give her the top job in government as well as largest share of seats in parliament.

Several aides said Thursday this option is under consideration.

Soviets in period of authoritarian reform — U.S.

WASHINGTON (R) — The Soviet Union is now undergoing a period of authoritarian reform in which the state is expected to continue to use heavy-handed measures to protect the union and restore order, a senior U.S. official has said.

In testimony to a Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee, State Department counselor Robert Zoellick gave the most comprehensive on-the-record U.S. assessment of change in the Soviet Union since the Kremlin cracked down last month on pro-independence forces in the Baltic republics.

He described this as a "difficult period in U.S.-Soviet relations" but said the successful effort to build an international coalition against Iraq ahead of the Gulf war would not have been possible without Moscow's cooperation.

Zoellick, one of Secretary of State Baker's top aides, said that for some time the United States "will need to maintain a flexible approach that can adjust to important problems raised by a major nation in great flux."

He predicted the current Soviet economic programme "will almost certainly fail."

In all, he adopted a more moderate approach to a Soviet Union in turmoil than conservative senators like Orrin Hatch of Utah who urged that the United States distance itself more from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and establish more formal ties with pro-independence republics.

Recent disorder reflected in a worsening economy and rising calls for autonomy "tapped deep-seated Russian fears" and saw Gorbachev turn to the right, "in his view to preserve his credibility as a leader and to preserve the union," Zoellick said.

He speculated Gorbachev may believe that in the face of such pressures he must act forcefully to restore order so as to "save" his reform programme.

"So I suspect that the Soviet Union is now in a period of what I would label authoritarian reform," he said.

"The state will be willing to use heavy-handed measures to restore what it considers to be the necessary prerequisites for a continued programme of economic and social modernisation ... the greatest danger is that the authoritarian elements could overwhelm the reform impulse," he said.

Because conditions in the Soviet Union are likely to worsen, the United States needs to secure the benefits it has achieved in several years of improved ties, continue to probe for other points of "mutual advantage" in the changed context and "seek to manage the uncertainty" by expanding contacts with the republics and pro-independence leaders, he said.

Latvian Communists warn of civil war

MOSCOW (AP) — Three days before Latvians and Estonians vote on independence in unofficial referendums, the top Latvian Communist official has warned of possible civil war.

"A civil war can be avoided in Latvia by declaring presidential rule in the republic," party chief Alfreds Rubiks was quoted as saying by the Soviet News Agency (TASS).

Presidential rule can include dissolving the local parliament and imposing virtual dictatorial control over the republic.

The vote in Latvia is expected to be close, since only 50 per cent of the population is ethnic Latvian. The rest are mostly Russian and Byelorussian.

Lithuanians, who are make up 80 per cent of their republic, overwhelmingly voted in favour of independence in a similar poll on Feb. 9.

In Lithuania, the parliament on Thursday passed a resolution calling for passive resistance if Soviet authorities use force to restrict parliament's authority.

Also Thursday, Denmark gave de facto recognition to Lithuania's independent government, said Rina Dapkus of the Lithuanian Parliamentary Press Office.

Ms. Dapkus said the foreign ministers of Denmark and Lithuania signed a protocol in which Denmark stated that it has always considered Lithuania's forcible incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1940 illegal.

The document also says that full diplomatic relations will be renewed "as soon as conditions allow," she said.

The Soviet Union recalled its ambassador to Iceland earlier this month after Iceland became the first country to recognise Lithuania's independence declaration last March.

The resolution passed Thursday by the Lithuanian parliament stated that all Soviet laws and orders are illegal in the Baltic republic. "All administrative institutions of the Republic of Lithuania and their officials must not cooperate with the occupiers."

Lithuanians should use "non-violent insubordinate resistance" and "political and social non-cooperation" against occupiers, it said.

The resolution was approved because "the Soviet Union continues to carry out acts of aggression directed against the republic of Lithuania," it said.

In Estonia, local officials in the

largely Russian city of Kohtla-Järve allowed Soviet border guards to vote in preliminary independence balloting, the Estonian News Agency reported.

Estonian officials say Soviet soldiers, who constitute up to one-third of the population by some estimates, may not vote.

Estonia's population is two-thirds Estonian, but several cities in the northeast near Leningrad are near wholly Russian.

Also Thursday, the United States sent its first shipment of aid directly to the Baltic republics. The plane load of \$4 million worth of medical supplies from project hope arrived in Riga, and will be distributed directly to Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and the Ukraine, TASS reported.

U.S. President George Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev agreed in December that the United States could send humanitarian aid directly to Soviet republics, rather than through Moscow and the national government.

Kremlin wages undeclared war

Meanwhile Georgia's parliament said Thursday that the Kremlin was waging an undeclared war against it and decided to follow other rebel Soviet republics in holding a referendum on independence.

"The central government is waging an undeclared war against the republic, which has refused to participate in the creation of the so-called new federation and to sign the union treaty," said a statement issued by parliament.

Georgia is among a number of republics that have refused to sign a draft treaty defining the relationship between the Soviet Union's 15 republics and the central government.

The nationalist parliament voted to hold a referendum on independence on March 31 when voters will be asked: "Do you want to restore the state independence of Georgia based on the declaration taken on May 26, 1918?"

Georgia, a republic with a history of strident nationalism and armed struggle, experienced a brief period of independence from 1918 until 1921 when it was crushed by the Red Army.

Parliament also voted to hold peace talks with the rebel region of South Ossetia. Leaders of the region declared last September they wanted to form their own republic within the Soviet Union rather than be part of an independent Georgia.

Vietnam ready for arms moratorium in Cambodia

BANGKOK (AP) — Vietnam said it is ready to respect a U.S.-Soviet initiative to stop the flow of arms to war-torn Cambodia and urged an urgent resumption of peace talks.

In an escalating civil war, Cambodia's Khmer Rouge guerrillas are intensifying attacks in the northwest, the Vietnamese Fore-

ign Ministry said in a statement released Thursday and seen here Friday.

The statement called on the Cambodian factions to reach a ceasefire agreement and reconvene their Supreme National Council to resolve their differences.

S. African opposition welcomes disbanding of security force

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — A government plan to disband the dreaded security police — criticised as South Africa's KGB — was welcomed Friday by the African National Congress (ANC) and other opposition groups.

Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok announced late Thursday the security police, which oversees political matters, would be merged April 1 with the main detective force, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

Vlok said the security police was being scrapped along with apartheid to get police out of politics. He said members of the force would reinforce regular police in curbing rampant crime.

"People are now more afraid of a criminal than a terrorist," Vlok told a news conference.

The security police, an elite wing of the South African police, gained a notorious reputation over the years. The force was charged with suppressing political opposition and critics claimed it killed and tortured anti-apartheid activists.

Business Day, a leading Johannesburg newspaper, said in an editorial Friday, "the security police: are apartheid's police."

Conservative Party denounced the government decision. Conservative spokesman Moolman Ments said the decision was "naïve" and he claimed terrorist attacks would soar.

It said the force banned and

spied on citizens and interrogated detainees, "many of whom died mysteriously in detention."

The ANC, the main black opposition group, said abolishing the security police was a welcome step. But it warned the police still lack widespread public confidence because they are seen as racist.

"The police will continue to lack credibility as long as they are perceived as part of the ongoing violence," the ANC said.

The pro-apartheid opposition Conservative Party denounced the government decision. Conservative spokesman Moolman Ments said the decision was "naïve" and he claimed terrorist attacks would soar.

It said the force banned and

Yugoslav leaders meet as crisis deepens

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — Leaders of Yugoslavia's feuding republics met Friday in their latest attempt to settle political differences and agree on the future of the crumbling federation.

The meeting is the sixth since Jan. 10 in a series of so-far fruitless summits of republic leaders held under the auspices of the Yugoslav Federation's eight-man presidency.

"Chances for reaching an agreement are getting steadily smaller," Croatia's centre-right President Franjo Tudjman said in an interview in Zagreb's Vjesnik daily.

Tudjman was the only president absent from Friday's meeting, but Stipe Mesic, Croatia's representative on the collective presidency, attended the talks.

There was no immediate explanation for Tudjman's absence. The country's simmering crisis pits the independence-minded, pro-Western states of Croatia and Slovenia against Communist-ruled Serbia, the largely Yugoslav republic, and Montenegro, its smallest.

Croatia and Slovenia advocate turning Yugoslavia into a loose association of sovereign nations. Serbia and Montenegro, which is also Communist-ruled, want a strong, centralised federation.

The central state of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the southern republic of Macedonia want a compromise. Both stand to lose territory if Serbia's President Slobodan Milosevic makes good on threats to expand Serbia to include all ethnic Serbs in other states should the federation split.

Citing the inability of the republics to reach a compromise on the country's constitution future, state parliaments in Slovenia and Croatia voted last week to initiate procedures for secession from Yugoslavia.

Those votes do not "preclude" the possibility of forming a new community of independent republics," said Slovenian president Milan Kucan in an interview in Belgrade's Borba daily Friday.

Mongolia replaces leader

PEKING (AP) — Mongolia's ruling Communist Party elected a new chairman Friday, a year after his predecessor took office in a party shakeup triggered by mass pro-democracy protests.

The recurring leadership changes reflect the Communist Party's uncertainty in Mongolia's new multiparty political system and in the face of the nation's food shortages, inflation and falling industrial production.

Little is known about Budragchyn Dashiyond, the new Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party Central Committee chairman. But Communist leaders in recent months have insisted that Mongolia remain on a clear Socialist path.

Dashiyond was named chairman at the Communist group's 20th congress. His election was reported by China's official Xinhua News Agency.

The five-day congress closed Friday, the 70th anniversary of the founding of the party on March 1, 1921.

Dashiyond takes over leadership of the party from Gombozhayn Ochirbat, who was named to the post a year ago during a party shakeup. He succeeded Jambyn Batmouh, who resigned with the rest of his five-man politburo in response to demands that the party be led by younger, more reform-minded members.

The reorganisation was prompted by a pro-democracy movement challenging the Communists' seven-decade grip on power. Mass protests and a hunger strike by demonstrators last winter and spring forced the Communists to legalise opposition parties and hold elections.

The Xinhua report said Dashiyond, 45, was elected to the control commission of the party Central Committee in April.

Thai king approves new constitution

BANGKOK (AP) — King Bhumibol Adulyadej Friday approved the new military junta's interim constitution, starting the process toward formation of a provisional government.

Details of the document were not immediately available, but junta leaders have said it aims to reduce the widespread practice of vote-buying.

Junta leader Gen. Sanjorn Kongsompong, the supreme commander of Thailand's armed forces, said the military seized power last Saturday because Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan's elected government was corrupt, tried to destroy

the military and protected enemies of the monarchy.

Also Friday, the junta ordered major changes in the tax code, including a 5 per cent cut in the top tax rate, will allow greater deductions for business expenses, families, employees and pensioners.

The changes, an apparent bid to benefit top military officers.

Junta leaders signed the draft Thursday to replace the 1978 constitution they abolished upon seizing power. Junta spokesmen said a military delegation flew to the northern city of Chiang Mai Friday morning and presented

the draft to the king at the Phuping Palace.

An interim government will be announced immediately after the constitution is approved, along with a legislative assembly that will draft a permanent constitution this year, junta spokesmen said. Elections would be held once it is finished, they said.

The bloodless takeover was the ninth successful coup in Thailand's six decades as a constitutional monarchy that has been dominated by the military.

The approval of the widely revered king is required for all major political changes.

43 killed in India building collapse

NEW DELHI (AP) — An unfinished apartment block in Calcutta collapsed, killing at least 43 people, Press Trust of India reported.

Most of the victims were either labourers working on the four-storey building or residents of adjoining huts, the news agency reported.

Earlier, United News of India said at least 38 people were injured, most of them seriously. The report said the upper three stories of the building caved in

early Thursday, trapping many sleeping workers in the rubble. Huts next to the building were also buried in the debris.

The news agency said a massive rescue operation has been launched by the police and fire brigade.

Rescue efforts were hampered because of narrow approach roads that prevented heavy cranes from moving into the area. Press Trust reported.

It quoted police and hospital

Kashmiri militants say kidnapped lecturer safe

SRINAGAR, India (R) — Kashmiri militants demanded Friday that the Indian government announce it was prepared to release detained separatist fighters in return for the kidnapped daughter of a prominent local politician.

But a man saying he spoke for the Jammu and Kashmir Students Liberation Front (JKSLF) told an international news agency by telephone that 29-year-old lecturer Naheeda Imtiaz would not be harmed.

"She is safe. She is like our sister, like the daughter of the prophet, Fatima. We will not do anything to harm her," the caller said.

He said the JKSLF women's wing has seized Imtiaz, daughter of member of parliament Saifuddin Soz, as she returned home from work Wednesday and was guarding her.

The caller would not say which or how many colleagues the JKSLF was demanding in return for her.

"The government must announce on radio and television they are prepared to release our colleagues. Only then will we name our colleagues," he said.

A deadline for compliance would be announced later Friday, he added.

There has been no official reaction from the government of Jammu and Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state run directly from New Delhi for the past year.

A senior official would say only: "We are making all efforts for her release. All channels are being utilised in this connection."

The JKSLF caller said colleagues had spoken by telephone to Soz, who rushed to Srinagar after his daughter was taken.

The caller would not give details of the conversation and Soz was not immediately available for comment.

The kidnap took place only

hours before the Indian parliament voted to extend direct rule of the Himalayan state for a further six months. Soz raised one of the few voices against extension during the debate.

The tens of thousands of Indian security men, most of them Hindus, hating a 14-month insurgency against Indian rule in which police have reported more than 2,000 deaths, have been placed on red alert during the search for Imtiaz.

But despite the heavy security, separatists seized two policemen in the southern Kashmir Valley town of Sopore Thursday night, one of them in his own police station.

Police said the other, abducted from a nearby street shortly after the raid on the police station, was released Friday.

It was a kidnap that turned sour anti-Indian feelings in the Kashmir Valley into open rebellion.

Five days after Mufi Mohammad Sayeed took office as home (interior) minister in December, 1989, his daughter was kidnapped in Srinagar by militants belonging to the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF).

She was freed the following month in return for five jailed militants, whose release prompted huge celebrations that turned into anti-Indian riots that were ruthlessly put down.

Imtiaz, wife of an electrical engineer with a four-year-old son, is the victim of the third kidnap operation by the JKSLF.

In April last year, they grabbed the vice chancellor of Srinagar University, his private secretary and a senior official of a state-run firm. All three were killed after the government refused to release militants in exchange for them.

Later, they took the son of a senior local official, but he was released without a deal being struck.

COLUMN

Man suspected of killing brother

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — One of the two "Mitchell brothers" who helped popularise U.S. pornographic movies and live sex shows was shot to death in his suburban San Francisco home and his brother was arrested on a murder charge, police said. The Mitchell brothers began producing soft-core pornographic films in their teens and later became known as the producers of "Behind the Green Door," a film once described as pornography's Gone With The Wind. It starred Marilyn Chambers, a former model whose likeness had been featured on packages of Ivory Snow soap products. According to local police, Artie Mitchell, 45, was found in his home with multiple gunshot wounds. His brother Jim Mitchell, 47, was arrested as he walked nearby carrying a revolver and a loaded rifle. Jim Mitchell was booked at Marin County Jail for investigation of murder. Investigators said they knew of no motive for the killing and acquaintances said they were surprised by the slaying.

Lenin's name removed from Soviet town

MOSCOW (R) — A Soviet town named after Vladimir Lenin has been renamed for the first time in the history of the Soviet Union. The Soviet News Agency (TASS) said parliament in the Central Asian Republic of Tajikistan had voted that the town of Leninabad would revert to its former name of Khujand. "Deputies think that the change of name is just a step to restoring historical justice, and not an attempt to harm the memory of Lenin," TASS said. Until recently the founder of the Soviet state was revered as almost infallible, but he has come under criticism from radicals for his career before, during and after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. TASS said the Tajik parliament had passed a law banning the practice of naming towns in the republic after people. Several cities and towns in the giant Russian Federation which were renamed after leading Communist Party figures have reverted to their original names in the last few years.

Elephants oust lovers from park

COLOMBO (R) — Trysting couples accustomed to privacy in a popular park in the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo now have company — 130 elephants. The elephants have been assembled in the city over the past four days from various parts of the Indian Ocean island to take part in a Buddhist pageant, the Perahera. This year more elephants than ever are being used in the colourful annual processions, presenting a problem over where to house them. Pageant organisers found the answer by getting permission from Colombo municipal authorities to keep the animals at the popular Victoria Park, named after a British Queen during colonial days. When not taking part in the Perahera the elephants are chained to trees in the park, and courting couples have to do their wooing elsewhere.

N. Zealand hatches rare parrot chicks

WELLINGTON (R) — A New Zealand bid to save one of the world's most endangered birds, the flightless Kakapo parrot, received a boost this week when two chicks were hatched for the first time in 10 years. One chick hatched on remote Little Barrier Island off the Auckland coast, while another hatched in an incubator at Auckland Zoo. They were the first known Kakapo hatchlings since 1981, Environment Minister Denis Marshall said. "We now have two chicks and every possibility they may be joined by others," he said in a statement. Kakapo numbers have slumped below 50 in recent years, making it one of the world's most endangered birds. Before European settlers arrived in New Zealand early last century, the nocturnal Kakapo flourished throughout the country. But the introduction of rats, cats and ferrets restricted them and other defenceless birds to remote parts of the South Island and Stewart Island by 1990. Fully grown Kakapo weigh about three kilograms, making them the world's largest parrot. But they are vulnerable to predators and only breed when there is an abundance of food.

Kohl hits back at critics, defends Gulf, EC policies

BONN (R) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl, accused abroad of being a poor ally and at home of lying to voters, hit back at his critics with a strong defence of foreign and domestic policies.

Speaking at a news conference in Bonn, he defended Germany's stance during the Gulf war, denied it was backsliding on European union and rejected criticism of his decision to introduce hefty tax rises.

Kohl, whose centre-right coalition won a landslide victory in elections in December, said the United States and Germany's main European allies had understood constitutional bars that prevented his government from sending troops to the Gulf war.

"At no moment was there any irritation or misunderstanding between myself and (U.S. President) George Bush," he said.

But he lashed out angrily at NATO-member Turkey over President Turgut Ozal's charge last month that Germany was an unreliable ally because it refused to state in advance that it would defend Turkey if that country was attacked by Iraq.

"No-one within NATO — no-one — may doubt Germany's readiness to fulfil its obligations. We proved this at all times," Kohl said.

He said Bonn had always been helpful to Turkey and he hoped Ankara would acknowledge this. "I was rather astonished by the harsh comments which we heard and which I feel were unjustified."

Kohl added: "I have to represent German interests. For me that means always being a reliable partner in NATO, but it does not mean having to fit in

with every passing mood in another country."

During the Gulf war, Germany sent military units to Turkey, the only NATO member bordering Iraq, and the eastern Mediterranean and donated around \$10 billion to the allied war chest.

Kohl dismissed as absurd charges by a spokesman for the European Commission that Germany was backtracking on its commitment to economic and monetary union in the European Community.

He said there was "not very clever" tendency among some of Germany's partners to cast doubt on its intentions. "In the EC question I find it quite absurd," he added.

Defending the government's announcement this week of big tax increases, including a one-year 7.5 per cent surcharge on

income tax, Kohl said the costs of Germany's Gulf contribution, aid to Eastern Europe and the worse than expected economic plight of East Germany had left him no choice.

He denied charges by the opposition Social Democrats and some conservative newspapers that he had lied to voters last year in promising that taxes would not have to be raised to pay for German unification last October.

Kohl admitted that he had failed to foresee the collapse of the Communist trading bloc Comecon, which accelerated East Germany's decline.